

SYRIAN IDENTITY IN THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

By engaging with recent developments in the study of empires, this book examines how inhabitants of Roman imperial Syria reinvented expressions and experiences of Greek, Roman, and Syrian identification. It demonstrates how the organization of Greek communities and a peer polity network extending citizenship to ethnic Syrians generated new semiotic frameworks for the performance of Greekness and Syrianness. Within these, Syria's inhabitants reoriented and interwove idioms of diverse cultural origins, including those from the Near East, to express Greek, Roman, and Syrian identifications in innovative and complex ways. While exploring a vast array of written and material sources, the book thus posits that Greekness and Syrianness were constantly shifting and transforming categories, and it critiques many assumptions that govern how scholars of antiquity often conceive of Roman imperial Greek identity, ethnicity and culture in the Roman Near East, and processes of "hybridity" or similar concepts.

NATHANAEL J. ANDRADE is an Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the University of Oregon.

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GREEK CULTURE IN THE ROMAN WORLD

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107012059

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First published 2013

Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by the MPG Books Group

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Andrade, Nathanael J.

Syrian identity in the Greco-Roman world / Nathanael J. Andrade.
pages cm. – (Greek culture in the Roman world)
Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-107-01205-9

1. Syria – History – 333 B.C.–634 A.D. 2. Identity (Psychology) – Syria –
History – To 1500. 3. Group identity – Syria – History – to 1500.
4. Syria – Civilization – Greek influences. 5. Syria – Civilization –
Roman influences. I. Title.

DS96.2.A63 2013

939.4'305 – dc23 2012040133

ISBN 978-1-107-01205-9 Hardback

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For Oliver and my parents

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Preface and technical notes

My work on Roman imperial Syria began as a dissertation at the University of Michigan. As it was being completed, the inhabitants of the region and adjacent lands that it describes continued to confront the legacy of western imperialism and persisting western intervention. In this region, there has been much popular protest, regime violence, global antagonisms, and the pursuit of human rights and just self-governance in the face of oppression, both foreign and domestic. It scarcely needs to be stated that this work is paltry in comparison to all these.

Many inscriptions of Roman Syria have been published numerous times. While I have endeavored to consult, compare, and collate the diverse publications of specific epigraphic texts, spatial constraints have prevented me from integrating and citing them all. The documentation that I provide naturally varies according to the contingencies of individual inscriptions, and I have accordingly cited standard corpora (such as *IGLS*, *IGSK*, or *OGIS*), original publications, or up-to-date readings. For Palmyra in particular, I consistently cite *PAT* and *IGLS* 17.1 (J.-B. Yon), as well as *CIS*, *Inv.*, or other publications. This work's other limitations are outlined in the introduction, and scholars from the many various disciplines with vested interest in the ancient Near East will certainly stress other interpretations, approaches, and materials. But scholars writing a finite composition must make choices regarding what and how to include, emphasize, and interpret. Being a social and cultural historian, I have made mine. For many readers, this narrative may raise questions more than it provides closure. If so, it has still fulfilled its purpose.

Transcribing names from multilingual contexts is a messy endeavor; any choice of representation will likely bring some offense. In rendering names, I have tried to be consistent, and I have pursued the following principles. First, I have used traditional Latinized versions for the Greek or Aramaic names that extremely notable figures, cities, and regions once bore. Otherwise, I have mostly reproduced original Greek names in

Latin characters (with “y” for upsilon and “ch” for chi). With regard to names that appear in bilingual sources, I use the Greek versions, but I provide Aramaic transliteration upon first mention. For Semitic names that documents render in Greek, I transcribe “H” for the initial letter of the Greek whenever a known Semitic antecedent suggests a rough breathing. I do not do this for other syllables. Finally, I generally present Aramaic words and names in transliteration and leave vocalization and pronunciation to true experts.

Similar statements can be made regarding the use of terms that describe Near Eastern languages or societies, which often leave traces but facilitate few certainties in the documents and materials. For instance, this study sometimes uses the term “Arab” for societies or ethnicities of the Near East that Greek and Roman sources classified in etic terms as “Arab”; it is not meant to represent how such “Arabs” defined themselves, which is almost entirely unobtainable. Even my frequent references to “ethnic Syrians” pose problems of specificity and are sometimes used in etic terms to represent how people were defined by Seleucid Greeks and Romans. But in this case, evidence suggests that many inhabitants of the Seleucid and Roman imperial Near East appropriated this identity category and interwove it with many others, even if the complex social constellation to which ethnic Syrians belonged cannot be entirely reconstructed and are omitted by the label. In sum, such terms are used for purposes of concision to stress how empires structured social categories, experiences, and orientations within their socio-political framework, and at various points my text qualifies further the nature of their usage.

Finally, this study sometimes describes Semitic or Near Eastern names, words, or cultural idioms rendered in Greek as Aramaic, Arabic, or Phoenician, and the like. These terms are not necessarily meant to represent precise, definitive origins for names or words, which are sometimes unverifiable or simply beyond the author’s expertise to provide. After all, various Near Eastern societies often adopted cultural forms from one another. Such terms therefore instead mark either the society for which the name, word, or idiom is particularly well known or the putative (if not totally verifiable) stage at which words or names passed into local Greek usage based on social contexts. For instance, if evidence indicates that local populations spoke Aramaic, the Semitic name or word that appears in Greek is most often identified as “Aramaic.” Likewise, names plausibly linked to populations that either spoke Arabic dialects or maintained Arabic names and cultural traces in Aramaic are sometimes described as “Arabic.” Similar statements can be made for the numerous other societies that populated the Near

East. The main interest of this work is not to establish definitive origins but simply to show how idioms and practices in circulation among various Near Eastern societies were domesticated by Greek communities and embedded in Greek practice. Such labels help outline this social process even if definitive origins are harder to theorize.

Acknowledgements

Numerous people have breathed life into this work, as both a dissertation and a book manuscript. In all its stages, David S. Potter shared his massive depth and breadth of knowledge of the ancient world, and he has routinely shaped my approach to matters both great and small. Raymond Van Dam encouraged me to seek improvement constantly and has conferred numerous insights regarding historical composition. Arthur M. F. W. Verhoogt and Yaron Z. Eliav contributed immensely to my grasp of Hellenistic and Judeo-Christian social formations and my handling of papyrus and epigraphic documents. J. V. A. Fine and Sara Forsdyke profoundly influenced my treatment of Greek communities and Hellenism over a vast chronology.

As I endeavored to transform the dissertation into a book, the Series editors and readers contributed unsurpassable wisdom and critique; their advice has been invaluable. Michael Sharp, Josephine Lane, Thomas O'Reilly and Gillian Dadd were indispensable in facilitating publication and entirely forgiving of my confused queries. Emma Dench, Kathleen Coleman, Christopher Jones and Christopher Krebs gave me immense intellectual support, advice, and encouragement as I reworked the manuscript. Ian Mladjov was very generous and helpful in producing maps, and Dimitrios Krallis gave me priceless aid at critical times. The guidance that Robert Hawley and Eric Reymond conferred regarding Aramaic enabled me to initiate my research. Derick Alexandre, Alexander Angelov, Emily Rush, Stephanie Bolz, Karen Acton, Jared Secord, Matthew Vester, Joshua Arthurs, and James Siekmeier read vast portions of the work, which benefited from their insight and vision. Ted Kaizer, G. W. Bowersock, Ariel Lewin, Michal Gawlikowski, Angelos Chaniotis, Donald Sanders, J. F. Healey, Nicholas Wright, and J.-Ch. Balty generously shared with me their scholarship or advice on critical issues. Waleed al-As'ad at the Palmyra Museum, Megan Doyon at the Yale University Art Gallery, and Thomas James and John Larson at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago kindly allowed me to reproduce museum materials.

Jacques Seigne, Andreas Schmidt-Colinet, and John McCoy showed ample benevolence in granting permission to reproduce plans. Gillian Cloke was a truly magnificent and kind copy-editor in every sense of the term. Marion Zelasny, Maria Tuya, Terrie Bramley, Julia Bernheim, Jane Sykora, and Sarah Rich exceeded all expectations in helping me finish the proof-reading and images at the Institute for Advanced Study. Amid it all, my spouse Jinny and new son Oliver have given me great joy and support at every turn. I have also been gifted with unwavering support by my parents, Paul and Marcia, and by Matt, Ben, Joe, Aquila, and numerous friends and relatives who merit more mention than this. I am grateful for all such acts of kindness, and I alone am responsible for any shortcomings.

Many institutions sustained my research and travels to Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel/Palestine, Greece, Bulgaria, and Italy. Many of those provided faculty and staff to guide me on my way. The Departments of Classical Studies and History at the University of Michigan sustained me as a graduate student. The Department of History at Simon Fraser University enabled me to teach my first overseas course, and the Department of the Classics at Harvard University welcomed me as a postdoctoral research and teaching fellow. The American School of Classical Studies at Athens (funded by the Michael Jameson Fellowship) and, most recently, the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, NJ (funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowships for Assistant Professors) have generously supported my research. The Department of History at West Virginia University and now the Department of History at the University of Oregon have each provided a collegial home. To them all I owe a great debt.

Abbreviations

<i>AAAS</i>	<i>Les annales archéologiques arabes syriennes.</i>
<i>ABC</i>	<i>Assyrian and Babylonian Chronicles.</i> Ed. and trans. A. K. Grayson. Locust Valley: J. J. Augustin, 1975.
<i>Agora</i>	“Les inscriptions de l’agora.” Ed. Christiane Delplace and Jean-Baptiste Yon, in Delplace and Dentzer-Feydy, (2005b), 151–254.
<i>ADAJ</i>	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.</i>
<i>AE</i>	<i>L’année épigraphique.</i>
<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology.</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology.</i>
<i>AMSS</i>	<i>Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum Syriace.</i> Ed. Paul Bedjan. Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1890–1897.
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt.</i>
<i>Ant. Or.</i>	<i>Antioch-on-the Orontes.</i> Princeton University Press, 1934–1970.
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.</i>
<i>Be. Sh.</i>	<i>Beth She’arim: Report on the Excavations during 1936–1940.</i> Ed. Benjamin Mazar. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1973–76.
<i>BMC Arabia</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia, and Persia.</i> Ed. G. F. Hill. London: British Museum, 1922.
<i>BMC Galatia</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Galatia, Cappadocia, and Syria.</i> Ed. Warwick Wroth. London: British Museum, 1899.
<i>BMC Lycaonia</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Lycaonia, Isauria, and Cilicia.</i> Ed. G. F. Hill. London: British Museum, 1900.
<i>BMC Phoenicia</i>	<i>Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Phoenicia.</i> Ed. G. F. Hill. London: British Museum, 1910.

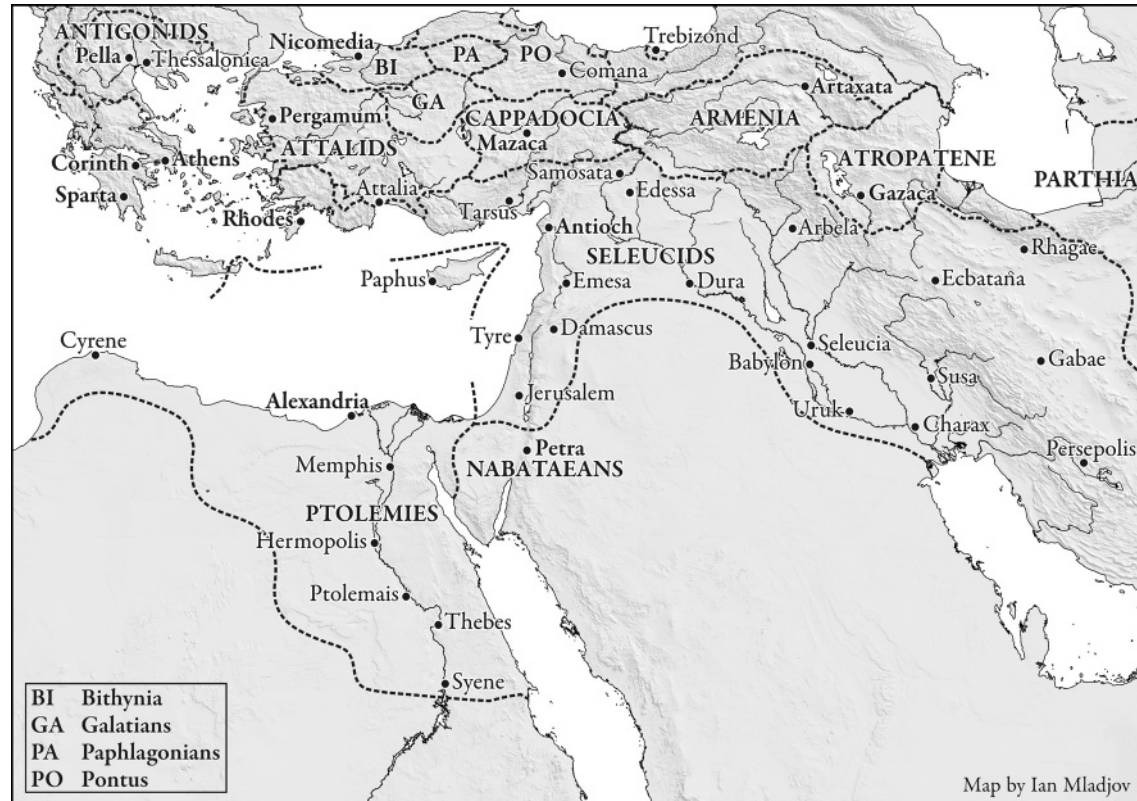
<i>Choix</i>	<i>Choix d'inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie.</i> Ed. Jean-Baptiste Yon and Pierre-Louis Gatier. Beirut: IFPO, 2009.
<i>CIIP</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae.</i>
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.</i>
<i>CIS</i>	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum.</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology.</i>
<i>CRAI</i>	<i>Comptes-rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.</i>
<i>Doura</i>	<i>Inventaire des inscriptions palmyréniennes de Doura-Europos.</i> Ed. Robert de Mesnil du Buisson. Paris: Geuther, 1939.
<i>EA</i>	<i>Epigraphica Anatolica.</i>
<i>FGrH</i>	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker.</i>
<i>GGM</i>	<i>Geographi Graeci minores.</i> Ed. Karl Müller. Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1855–1861.
<i>H</i>	<i>Inventaire des inscriptions hatréennes.</i> Ed. Basile Aggoula. Paris: Geuthner, 1991. <i>Die aramäischen Inschriften aus Assur, Hatra, und dem übrigen Östmesopotamian (datiert 44 v. Chr. bis 238 n. Chr.).</i> Ed. Klaus Beyer. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1998.
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal.</i>
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae.</i>
<i>IGF</i>	<i>Inscriptions grecques de la France.</i> Ed. J.-C. Decourt. Lyon: MOM.
<i>IGLS</i>	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie.</i>
<i>IGR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes.</i> Ed. R. Cagnat et al. Paris: Leroux.
<i>IGSK</i>	<i>Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien</i> , vol. LXV: <i>Iszczizioni dello estremo Oriente.</i> Ed. Filippo Canali de Rossi. Bonn: Habelt, 2004.
<i>IJO</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis</i> , vol. III: <i>Syria and Cyprus.</i> Ed. David Noy and Hanswulf Bloedhorn. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004.
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae.</i> Ed. Hermann Dessau.
<i>INJ</i>	<i>Israel Numismatic Journal.</i>
<i>Inv.</i>	<i>Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre.</i> Ed. J. Cantineau et al. 1930–1975.

<i>IP</i>	<i>Inscriptions de Palmyre: promenades épigraphiques dans la ville de Palmyre.</i> Ed. Khaled al-As'ad and Jean-Baptiste Yon. Beirut: IFAPO, 2001.
<i>IosPE</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Antiquae Orae Septentrionalis Ponti Euxini.</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies.</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies.</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies.</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review.</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology.</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies.</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period.</i>
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
<i>MEFRA</i>	<i>Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome.</i>
<i>MUSJ</i>	<i>Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph.</i>
<i>NemDag.</i>	<i>Nemrud Dağı: the Hierothesion of Antiochus I of Commagene; Results of the American Excavations Directed by Theresa B. Goell.</i> Ed. Donald Sanders. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996.
<i>OGIS</i>	<i>Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae.</i> Ed. Wilhelm Ditterberger. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1903–1905.
<i>P. Yadin</i>	<i>The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters, vol. 1: Greek Papyri.</i> Ed. Naphtali Lewis. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Authority, 1989.
<i>P. Dura</i>	<i>The Excavations at Dura Europos. Final Report v, Part 1: the Parchments and Papyri.</i> Ed. C. Bradford Welles. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.
<i>PAT</i>	<i>Palmyrene Aramaic Texts.</i> Ed. Delbert Hillers and Eleonora Cussini. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des études anciennes.</i>
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des études grecques.</i>
<i>RIC</i>	<i>Roman Imperial Coinage.</i>
<i>RPC</i>	<i>Roman Provincial Coinage.</i>
<i>RTP</i>	<i>Recueil des tessères de Palmyre.</i> Ed. Harald Ingholt, Henri Seyrig, and Jean Starcky. Paris: Impr. Nationale, 1955.
<i>SC</i>	<i>Seleucid Coins: a Comprehensive Catalogue.</i> Ed. Arthur Houghton <i>et al.</i> New York and Lancaster: American

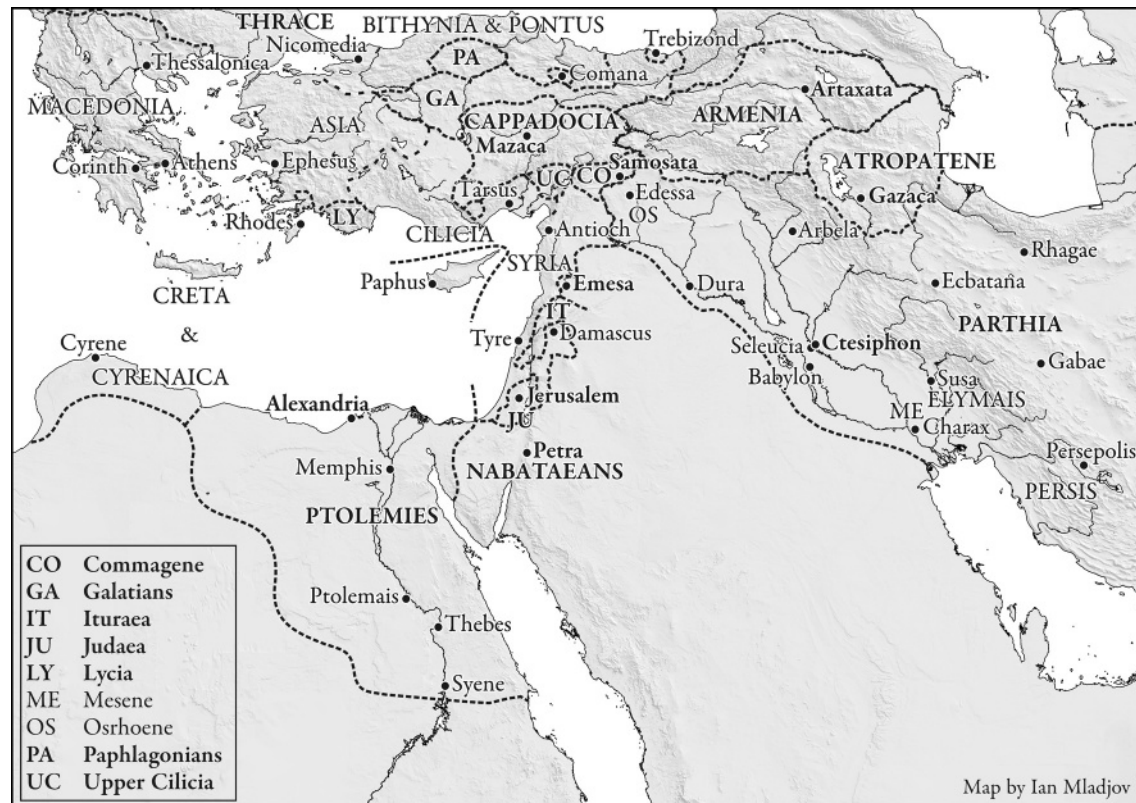
	Numismatic Society and Classical Numismatic Group, 2002 and 2008.
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica.</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum.</i>
<i>Syll.</i>	<i>Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum.</i> Ed. Wilhelm Dittenberger. 3rd. ed. Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915–1924.
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association.</i>
<i>TEAD</i>	<i>The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Preliminary Reports.</i> New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929–1952.
<i>YCS</i>	<i>Yale Classical Studies.</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik.</i>



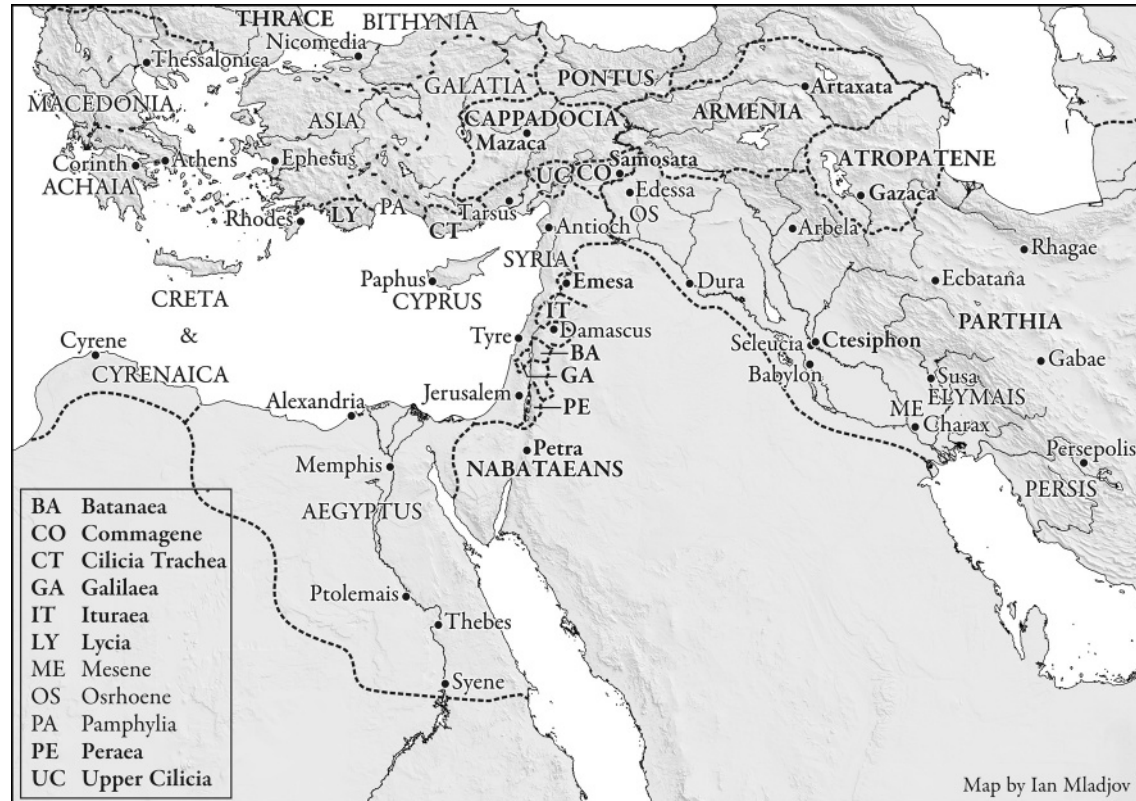
Map 1. Map of Roman Syria (general)



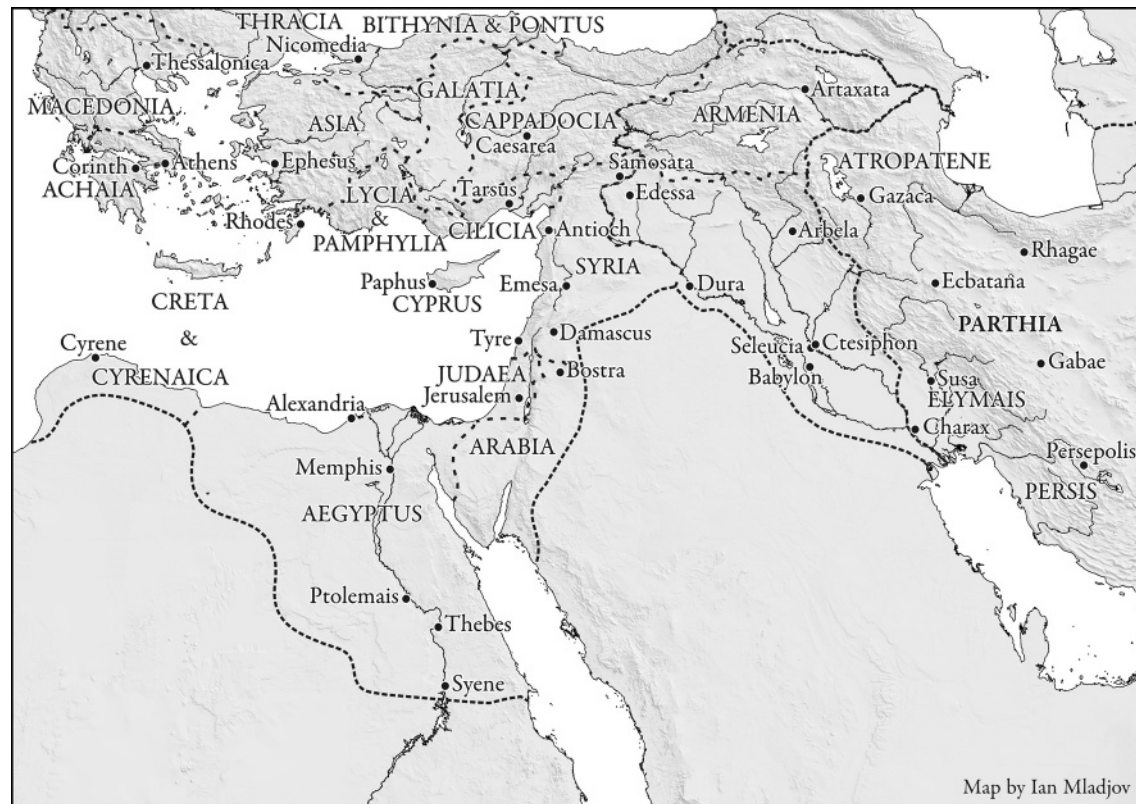
Map 2. 170 BCE



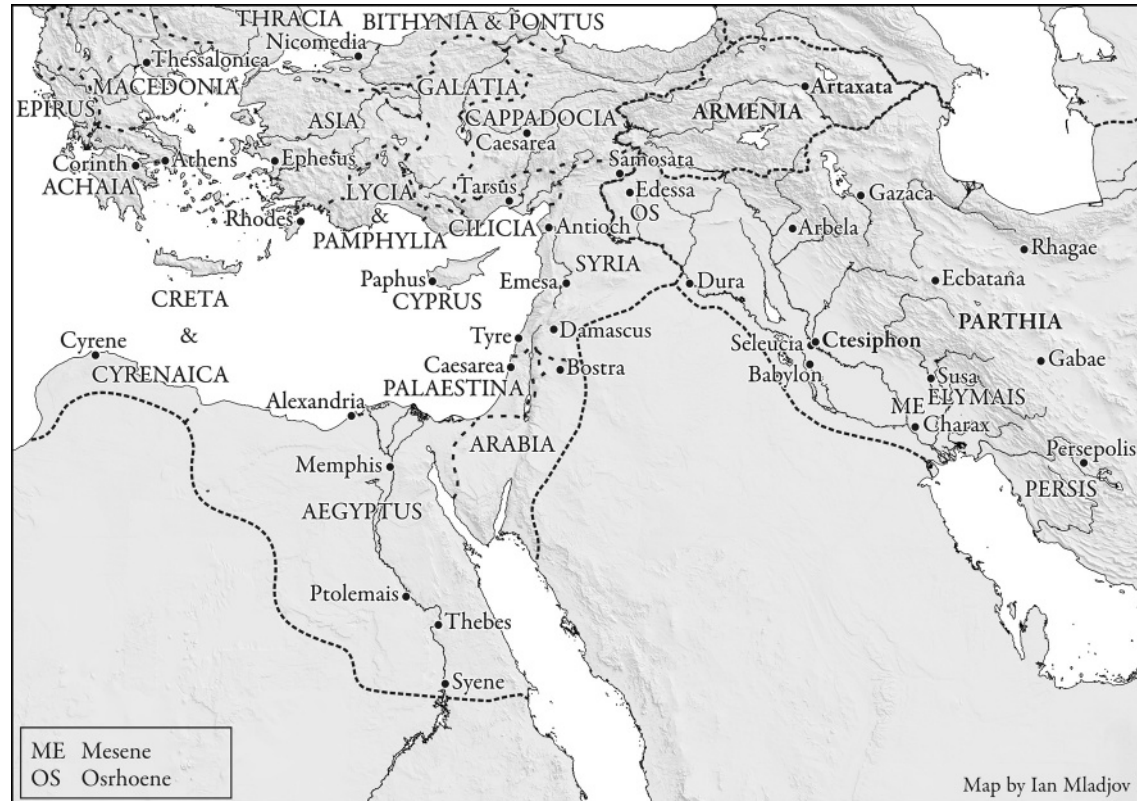
Map 3. 60 BCE



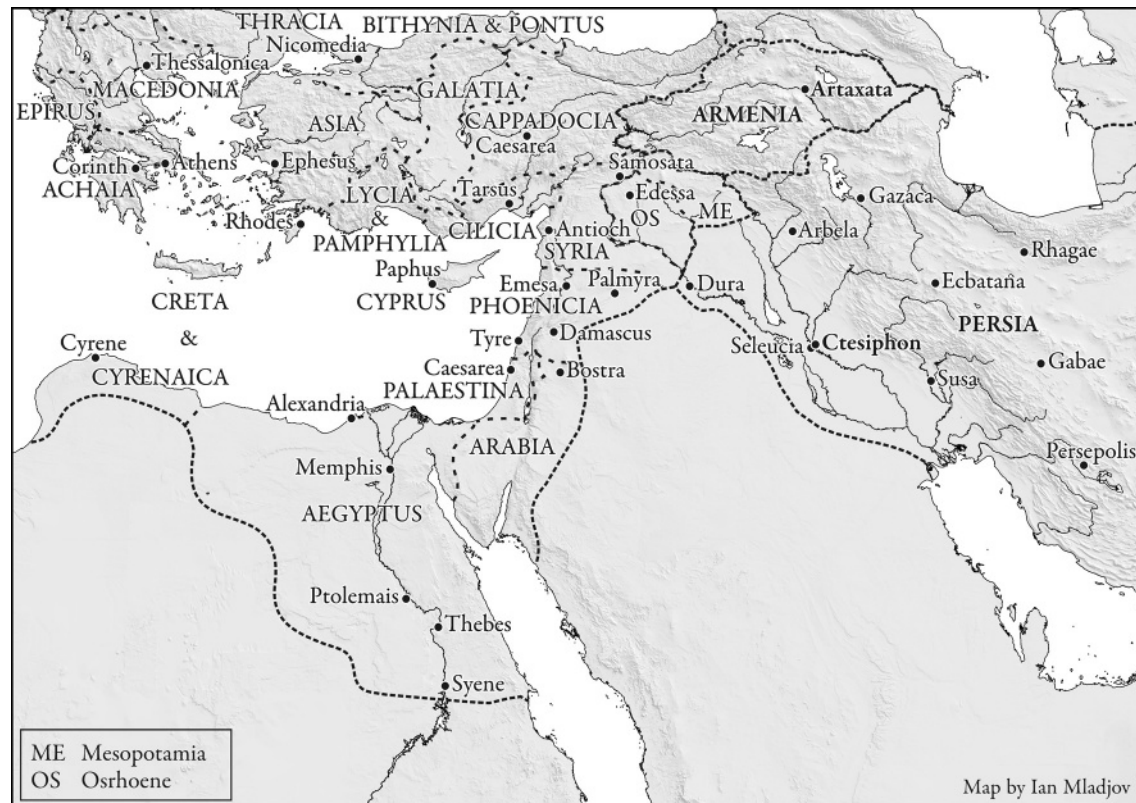
Map 4. 14 CE



Map 5. 117 CE



Map 6. 180 CE



Map 7. 235 CE

Introduction

Signification and cultural performance in Roman imperial Syria

The processes of Greek and Roman imperialism charged many social practices of the Near East with new significance. One such practice was the worship of metal standards. Assyrians had worshipped metal standards, and as Rome exerted authority in the Near East, the inhabitants of Hatra in Mesopotamia venerated the Roman legionary standard as a divinity named Samya.¹ Yet, the Hatrenes charged Samya with new meanings conforming to their conceptual universe. Significantly, their “translation” of Samya transformed a military tool and “sign” of Roman imperialism into an expression of local subjectivity. In fact, the Latin and Greek words for a standard, *signum* and *σήμειον*, also meant “sign,” and “Samya” was perhaps an Aramaic transliteration of *σήμειον*. The Hatrenes had appropriated the “sign” of Roman imperialism and recast it as a divinity through which they signified “Hatreneness” amid Roman encroachment.

Under Greek and Roman imperialism, how provincial subjects organized and charged with meaning material objects and symbols dictated cultural politics and community formation in the Near East. The divine standard’s “signification” or “semantics” were thereby complex; Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern traditions shaped their formation.² Also complex is how local communities recast this symbol of Roman imperialism. A Parthian vassal, Hatra repulsed two Roman invasions and only admitted Roman legions amid the Sasanian threat of the 230s CE. The city never underwent the ideological reorientation of the Greek city-states that Roman imperialism had sustained in its eastern territories, and Hatrenes primarily used their local Aramaic dialect until the Sasanians destroyed the city in 241 CE. By

¹ Sommer (2003a) 79, no. 114; Drijvers (1977) 834–35; Dirven (2009) 54–55 discuss the “standard” along with a notable relief in which it appears with the god Nergal. Hatrean inscriptions H3, 52, 56, 65, 74–75, 79, 82, 151, 200–1, 209, 235, 338, 384(?), 1007, 1008a, 1010 attest.

² Dirven (2005). Dirven (2006–07) 379–80 treats standards in cult processions. Goldman (1999) 87, Fig. 13–14: pictograms.

integrating Samya into their eclectic pantheon, the Hatrenes transformed the Roman legionary standard from a tool and signifier of Roman supremacy into a divine presence.³ In fact, when Roman legions besieged Hatra in 198–199, they were repulsed by its king Abd-Samya (servant of Samya).

Yet, not all Near Eastern societies worshipped the “sign” of Rome’s legionary standard in opposition to Greek civic life and Roman imperialism during this period. In fact, the “sign” that it represented was so polyvalent that it accommodated numerous significations. In Dura-Europos, *Europaioi* arguably integrated it into cult practices through which they expressed ethnic Greekness even while worshipping the Syrian divinity Atargatis and her consort.⁴ Likewise, *On the Syrian Goddess*, a text of Lucian of Samosata, indicates that the significance of the standard or “sign” was so expansive that it encapsulated no single meaning or likeness. But it still bore images of numerous divinities. Its narrator states:

Between both [Zeus and the Assyrian Hera] another golden statue stands, without resembling the other statues at all. It has no specific likeness (*morphēn*), but it bears images (*eidea*) of the other gods. It is called “standard/sign” (*sēmēion*) even by the Assyrians themselves. And they have not ascribed any specific name (*ounoma*) to it, nor do they even say anything of its origin and its image (*eideos*).⁵

As the examples above indicate, signs are pregnant with polyvalent, unstable, and “multiform” significances. Their meanings depend on the demands of social, discursive, and performative contexts within which subjects act.⁶ Syrians could thus perform the part of Greeks or Romans while embracing Near Eastern cultural idioms and practices, and they could produce new expressions of Syrianness by cultivating Greek and Roman ones.

The polyvalence of Lucian’s “sign” thereby marks the variability through which Greekness could be expressed, and such complexity is one of this study’s central topics. As it argues, Syrians of diverse cultural persuasions

³ Likewise, Appadurai (1996) 91–105 discusses cricket’s translation from a “British” to an “Indian” national pastime in decolonized India.

⁴ *TEAD* 3, Pl. 14. Chapter 7 discusses Dura-Europos’ temple of Atargatis.

⁵ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 33. Elsner (2001b) 138–39; Richter (2011) 239–40 analyze Lucian’s description. More literally, divine images often decorated standards. Chapters 9–10 discuss *On the Syrian Goddess* as a second-century Lucianic text.

⁶ This study uses “discourse” and “performance” to describe how social agents, who navigate the constraints of social contexts, establish and maintain identifications and positions (even if unstable) before scrutinizing audiences through the spoken or written word, visible markers of status, and repeated physical acts. Bourdieu, Bakhtin, Butler, Foucault, Lacan, and various post-colonial thinkers, whom this work cites more specifically later, variously constitute (but not exhaustively) the theoretical basis for my usage.

participated in the civic life of the Greek *polis* (city-state), and the authoritative frameworks of Syria's *poleis* determined their Greek affiliations amid their cultivation of signs and material performances of Near Eastern origin. In fact, *poleis* produced fields of signification that interwove Greek and local symbols to redefine what spoken discourses, modes of performance, and objects were "Greek." In such discursive and performative fields, Syria's inhabitants reconstituted the categories of "Greek," "Syrian," "Roman," "Arab," and "Phoenician" in ways that enabled citizens to express Greek identifications with Near Eastern symbols and local, regional, or even indigenous ones with Greek idioms.⁷ In some instances, such Greeks recast Greek signs as "Syrian" and Syrian signs as "Greek." They even sometimes spoke Aramaic and implemented Near Eastern or "hybrid" material practices instead of adopting classical Greek idioms.⁸ They in fact reshaped and reconstituted expressions of Greekness (and its Roman and Syrian counterparts) amid the material and symbolic constraints that socio-economic and political contexts imposed. Moreover, inhabitants of Roman imperial Syria perhaps never created a universal "Syrian" culture embedded only in Near Eastern traditions. But they produced experiences of Syrian culture, with its local and regional variations, by cultivating Greek symbols or interweaving Greek and Near Eastern ones.

Lucian's suggestion that Greekness was polyvalent, complex, unstable, and embedded in diverse images, symbols, or idioms receives validation from an inscribed pillar erected in central India *c.* 110 BCE. In the inscription, Heliodoros, son of Dion, of Taxila offered his pillar to the Hindu divinity Vishnu, "the god of gods." Heliodoros' inscription was in Prakrit, and it defined Heliodoros as "the Greek (*Yona*) ambassador of king" Antialkidas of Taxila.⁹ Although far afield from Syria, his pillar shows that Greekness was not always embedded in Greek language or the worship of classical Greek divinities, as do "Buddhist" inscriptions that Yavanas or Yonakas (Greeks) raised in India.¹⁰ In certain contexts, Greekness was expressed through idioms that classical Greeks deemed "barbarous," and this suggests that in Syria the cultivation of Aramaic, Near Eastern divinities, or Near Eastern material cultures could be embedded in Greek performance. Greekness (or Greek culture) was not a static, universal category. It was not always classical or homogenous.¹¹

⁷ Bowersock (1990) 7–9 describes how Syrians expressed local identifications through Hellenism.

⁸ Butcher (2003) 281–83, 332–34; Sommer (2004a) 154–59; Versluys (2008) raise such issues. Eco (1976) 27–28 posits that all objects or entities can become symbolic phenomena and be inserted into systems of cultural units on which their semantic function depends.

⁹ *IGSK* 65.409; Karttunen (1997) 297; Burstein (2003) 234, (2010) 185. ¹⁰ Lerner (1999–2000).

¹¹ Burstein (2003) 227–40.

In this work, “culture” is defined as a dynamic system of idioms that symbolize and mark social, ethnic, or institutional sameness or difference. But if culture expresses social identifications, cultural frameworks still transform, shift boundaries, and integrate foreign idioms over time.¹² Even as Greek culture (Greekness) signified social, ethnic, or civic boundaries, its constituent parts sometimes differed from classical Greek idioms, symbols, and practices. In other words, what modern scholars uniformly label Greek culture is not necessarily what inhabitants of the ancient Near East experienced as Greek culture, or the idioms that expressed Greek social affiliations. The same principle governs Roman, Syrian, and other types of social identification and their cultural expressions. To convey such premises, this study uses “Greekness” to describe the transforming expressions of culture and the interweaving of diverse cultural idioms that subjects associated with their own Greek identifications, whether ethnic, social, citizen, or otherwise. It by contrast employs “Greek culture” or variations thereof to describe “classical” idioms, symbols, and practices that scholars typically treat as Greek.¹³ In this sense, Greekness (what subjects framed as their Greek culture) in the Hellenistic and Roman Near East sometimes interwove idioms of heterogeneous origins, including Greek cultural idioms (as scholars normally define them) and those of Near Eastern ethnicities or societies.

From the reign of Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE) to the ascendancy of the Palmyrene dynasts (260–70s CE), the Greek communities of Syria did not express Greekness uniformly, nor did Syrians (who were often also Greeks) articulate Syrianness in a single standard way. Material conditions made this impossible. The region possessed many ethnicities, distinct social communities, and diverse ways for expressing identification categories. Many inhabitants of the Near East belonged to numerous overlapping groups determined by patrilineal genealogy, such as clans, “tribes,” or ethnicities. Local subjects often experienced ethnic sameness through perceptions of kinship encapsulated by the terms *ethnos*, *phylē*, or *genos*, whether these were clans, “tribes,” ethnicities, or races.¹⁴ Such ethnic or social classifications

¹² Although “culture” is a debated concept, Whitmarsh (2001a) 37 defines it as “a dynamic social system providing the structures that enable and limit the construction of identity positions.” This study examines how civic performances shaped culture, and vice versa.

¹³ The same principles govern “Romanness” and “Syrianness” and their relationship to Roman, Greek, and Near Eastern cultural idioms. Although this study uses “Near Eastern” generically for idioms not introduced to the Near East by Greeks or Romans, it employs ethnically or socially specific labels (Syrians, Phoenician, etc.) whenever possible.

¹⁴ Hall (1997) 25–33 defines “ethnicity” as the location of putative common descent in ways determining social interaction. Brubaker (2004a) 17–18; Brubaker *et al.* (2004) 64–87 emphasize that ethnicity is

intersected with Greek citizenship.¹⁵ The categories of “Greek,” “Roman,” and “Syrian” were therefore not essential and unchanging classifications articulated through a stable or universal set of symbols. Imperial subjects produced these categories by enacting performances of ancestral, practical, or socio-political sameness and cultivating diverse cultural symbols that expressed it. They had significant points of intersection, and their formulations were embedded in the discursive and performative context through which the Greek *polis* generated perceptions of commonality.¹⁶ Greek citizens, with their discrete “cultures,” could belong to numerous ethnicities or social groups, with their own respective, yet intersecting, “cultures.”

Within the Greek *polis*’ conceptual framework, the categories of “Greek” and “Syrian” and their constituent parts underwent continual change during the Seleucid, Parthian, and Roman periods. The demands of various contexts and perspectives shaped them. In certain instances, the categories intersected and encompassed the same people or communities; in others, they did not. Because of this, one cannot define “Syrian” or “Greek” from the outset. This work in fact illustrates how the rhetorical and practical strategies of social subjects constituted these categories in various ways. One constant, as this study proposes, was that the discourses and performances of the Greek *polis* foremost defined, reconstituted, or eradicated conceptual and practical boundaries between Greeks and Syrians. Yet, these boundaries changed. Ethnic Syrians possessed Greek citizenship and signified Greek identifications under the Romans in ways that they had not under the Seleucids. As the Roman empire determined new socio-political, regional, and judicial categories, especially by organizing Greek peer polity networks into provinces and *koina*, Syrians expressed new forms of local subjectivity as they navigated or reinterpreted such categories.¹⁷

In other words, the formation of Greek and Syrian social identifications in the Seleucid and Roman Near East depended on imperial structuring.

a mode of cognition and categorical framing, not necessarily a group implementing mass organized action. This work does not address race, but it sometimes discusses how Greeks and Romans ascribed to Syrians hereditary traits. Isaac (2004); Buell (2005); Lape (2010) 31–52 analyze race’s significance, mutability, and difference from ethnicity.

¹⁵ A Greek citizen could trace a “non-Greek” ethnic genealogy. In a dedication, Pouplios Ailios Germanos, a civic councilor of Canatha, claims that he is “of the [sons] of *Bennathē*,” a putative kinship group, “tribe,” or ethnicity. Waddington (1870) 2339.

¹⁶ Following Cooper and Brubaker (2005) 59–90, I generally refrain from using the word “identity,” whose “hard” and “weak” usages in current scholarship either oversimplify social affiliations or fail to map consistent sameness over time.

¹⁷ Whitmarsh (2010a); Ando (2010) frame the “global” and “local” as mutually constituting and treat imperialism as framing provincial subjectivities. Kaizer (2005) 204; (2006a) 41–47 stresses the importance of establishing local perspectives on Near Eastern religion.

The Seleucid and Roman imperial powers imposed cultural and civic categories upon Syria's landscape. Both endeavored to control it despite its geographic vulnerability to invasion from the Mediterranean or Iran.¹⁸ Yet, they did so while categorizing the Near East's populations in different ways. Amid their imperial consolidation, the Seleucid Greeks defined a Syrian *ethnos*. They situated Aramaic-speakers in this ethnic category because they believed them to be descended from ancient Assyrians or Arameans.¹⁹

The Seleucids inherited their conception of an (As)Syrian *ethnos* from classical Greeks, who generally deemed Syrians and Assyrians identical. In the fifth century BCE, the historian Herodotus noted that those whom Persians called Assyrians were Syrians for Greeks. Under the emperor Augustus, the geographer Strabo retained this usage by describing the inhabitants of the neo-Assyrian empire (including Babylonia) as "Assyrian" and "Syrian."²⁰ A bilingual Luwian-Phoenician inscription (eighth century BCE) clarifies why Greeks conflated Syrians and Assyrians. The Phoenician portion labeled Assyrians as "'SHRYM," but the Luwian listed them as "su+ra/i-wa/i-za-ha(URBS)," which means "that Syrian House."²¹ Seventh-century Neo-Assyrian texts also variously called Assyrians *Assūrāyu* and *Sūrāyu*.²² Amid their contact with the Near East, classical Greeks therefore adopted the interchangeable use of "Syrian" and "Assyrian." Such usage was not uniform. Herodotus also routinely located Syria west of the Euphrates, and the Seleucid Greeks administered the districts of Seleucia, Coele Syria, and Commagene, in which they situated "Syrians" defined more restrictively.²³ But the conflation of Syrians and Assyrians still persisted.

By contrast, the Arameans were distinct from (As)Syrians in pre-Hellenistic times. The Seleucids complicated this distinction. Since "(As)Syrians" and "Arameans" by Achaemenid Persian rule often spoke Aramaic and shared cultural practices, Greeks increasingly categorized them as the same ethnicity, or thought that "Arameans" were what (As)Syrians

¹⁸ G. Fowden (1993) 17–19 examines the Fertile Crescent's lack of "long-term political autonomy" in antiquity. Grainger (2010) 1–10 likewise for Syria.

¹⁹ In the late second and early first millennium, as the Assyrians conquered the various Aramean kingdoms and deported Arameans into their interior, they increasingly shared language and cultural attributes. Kepinski and Tenu (2009); Parpola (2004) 1–15; Beaulieu (2005).

²⁰ Hdt. 7.63; Strabo, 16.1.1–2; with Pomponius Mela 1.62–63; Pompeius Trogus via Justin 1.2.13; Pliny, *NH* 5.66–82. Likewise, Xen., *Anabasis* 1.4.19 uses Syria to describe what Persian kings called "Assyria," as the royal inscriptions of Briant (2002) 173 indicate. Frye (1992) 281–85 argues that "Syrian" and "Assyrian," as used by Greeks, described the same people.

²¹ Rollinger (2006) 284–85; from a relief of Tarhunzas/Bel found near Adana.

²² Parpola (2004) 16–17.

²³ Hdt. 2.104 and 3.5; Strabo, 16.2 (esp. 1–3). Capdetrey (2007) 244–50; Cotton and Wörrle (2007); Gera (2009) document and discuss such districts.

called themselves. These views penetrated Roman-era works. In the first century CE, Josephus noted that the legendary figure Aramus had ruled the Arameans, whom the “Greeks call Syrians.” Strabo, citing Posidonius, stated that the people named Syrians by the Greeks called themselves Arameans.²⁴ Greeks thereby often defined Assyrians, Syrians, and Arameans to constitute the same society that inhabited a vast landscape containing Syria proper, classical Assyria, Babylonia, and in between.

The (As)Syrian/Aramean *ethnos* that Seleucid Greeks had defined, in its most exclusive and inclusive terms, suffered economic exploitation. Syrian villages facilitated the economic stability of Greek *poleis* and colonies, and Greeks did not integrate ethnic Syrians into their communities. Syrians conceded land to Greek settlers and conferred tribute upon a royal administration controlled by ethnic Greeks. Many Syrian peasants paid rents or labored for Greek landlords. Otherwise, temple communities governed localities, without implementing Greek civic systems.²⁵ The Seleucid empire accordingly ruled the Syrian *ethnos* as a subject ethnicity, whether Greeks called it Syrian, Assyrian, or Aramean, and however they defined it in various contexts. Even as the Seleucids treated Syrians as the “indigenous” population residing in districts west of the Euphrates, the premise that Syrians were in ethnic terms Assyrians/Arameans persisted.

The Romans and their client kings, however, reoriented the category “Syrian” in ways that collapsed the distinction between Greek *politeia* and Syrian *ethnos* over time. According to Roman-era perceptions, the Syrian *ethnos* was a meaningful regional and social category informed by civic criteria. As such, it was not an ethnicity defined by putative genealogy. It also did not coordinate uniform mass action, and its constituent parts shifted and incrementally expanded. But over time it still engendered a social coherence and cognition sustained by a Greek peer polity network that constituted the structuring principle of the “Syrian” province(s) and its *koina* affiliations. While interspersed by “Arab” peoples, it included the inhabitants of regions west of the Euphrates where ethnic Syrians, Phoenicians, or, in certain contexts, Judeans or Cilicians dwelled.²⁶ In 63 BCE,

²⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 1.143–45; Strabo, 1.2.34 and 16.4.27 (Radt (2002–11) 5.132; 8.250–52; 8.395 adds clarity). But Josephus, informed by Jewish scripture, distinguishes Arameans from Assyrians. Millar (1993a) 7–11 on Josephus is instructive.

²⁵ Van de Mieroop (2007) 282–85, 296 discusses how temple hierarchies structured urban community and rural land.

²⁶ Strabo, 16.2 (esp. 1–3) includes among Syrians the inhabitants of Seleucis, Coele Syria, Commagene, and greater Phoenicia (which extended beyond classical Phoenicia, along the coast to Gaza/Pelusium). The integration of greater Judea occurred incrementally over the first century CE, with Hadrian’s Syria Palestina being its fulfillment. The Severans incorporated Mesopotamian lands. The “Arabs” (16.2.10–11, 18, 20) of “Parapotamia” and various rugged or dry regions (MacDonald

Pompey had circumscribed this *ethnos*, except for Commagene, Judea, and a patchwork of principalities, within a single province (*eparcheia*) and framed it as a regional social category with civic implications. Strabo, even while conflating ethnic Assyrians and Syrians, accordingly observed that “those called Syrian today” resided west of the Euphrates, in Roman Syria.²⁷ Thereafter citizens of Greek cities in Syria or Phoenicia assumed identifications as Greeks and Syrians, and people whom the Seleucids categorized as ethnic Syrians earned citizenship in Greek *poleis*, thereby becoming “legitimately Greek.” Amid this process, “colonizers” and “colonized” became increasingly indistinct; “Greek” and “Syrian” described communities of citizens that shared civic performances.²⁸

The scope of this study imposes certain limits. Because it focuses on the formation and impact of Greek *poleis* and citizenship, its narrative omits many important topics and materials. These include Syria’s complex topographies and ecologies, rural life, economic trends, habitation patterns, infrastructure, political boundaries, Roman administrative tenures, experiences of Roman military intervention, cult practices, temple architecture, and (generally) Judeo-Christian writings and practices.²⁹ The shifts in funerary practices that Roman imperialism induced in cities and rural areas and their impact on gendered, civic, ethnic, or social presentation among elites and non-elites do not undergo examination.³⁰ In fact, much of the Near East’s environmental determinants and its voluminous material culture cannot receive treatment, even at sites like Palmyra and Dura-Europos. This work also cannot explore the rise of Syriac in Osrhoene and its role in expressing Assyrian, Aramean, or Syrian identification and memory under late antique Roman, Persian, and Islamic Arab rule.³¹ Finally, it cannot scrutinize which late antique or medieval Latin, Greek, Hebrew,

(2009) 280–83 lists “Arab” regions) were included over time. My text references the form of the Syrian *ethnos* appropriate to the period discussed. Chapters 3; 6 clarify “Arabs.”

²⁷ Strabo, 16.1.2. Josephus, *AJ* 18.1–2 describes how Judeans were integrated into the Syrian *ethnos* and its province c. 6 CE. Ando (2010) 31–40 treats Roman organization of provinces in spatial, geographical, and juridical terms.

²⁸ Imperial affairs constitute an “intricate web of relations,” not simple dichotomies between colonizer and colonized. Comaroff (1997) 165.

²⁹ Villages and rural surveys receive treatment *passim*. Freyberger (1998); Steinsapir (2005): temples and rural sanctuaries. Dąbrowa (1998): Roman governors. Isaac (1990); Pollard (2000); Gebhardt (2002); De Giorgi (2007); Edwell (2008); Sommer (2004a): the military, frontier defense, or their impact. My account integrates other works whenever relevant.

³⁰ De Jong (2007); (2010).

³¹ See for example Brock (1998); Brock, with Taylor (2001); Dalley (1998) on Mesopotamia, with Salveson’s treatment of Aramaic sources; Healey (2007); Shepardson (2009); Walker (2006); Becker (2008); Haar Romeny (2009); Wood (2010); Andrade (2010–2011).

Syriac, or Arabic texts offer useful data for this period.³² It prioritizes contemporary sources, when possible.

Because the civic contexts of Greek *poleis* were so significant in defining “Greek” and “Syrian,” this study explores Greek civic communities and the categorization of “Syrian” in the Near East. It pursues a roughly chronological narrative from the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV (175–164 BCE) to the end of the Palmyrene Roman empire (273 CE). The dispositions of Greek *poleis* in Syria are not consistently documented. The quality of evidence differs in time, place, and sources, whether literary, epigraphic, numismatic, or archaeological. Accordingly, this study traces the dispositions of Greek *poleis* in Roman Syria and some adjacent territories, but it focuses on instances in which materials, especially inscriptions and remains of urban landscapes, are sufficiently ample to illuminate how certain *poleis* were constituted at specific times and places over four centuries. Through this episodic approach and its test cases, it delineates transformations in Syria’s Greek civic communities and their performances of Greekness. The following sections outline how.

Greek *poleis* and the Syrian *ethnos* (Part I)

In *On the Syrian Goddess*, Lucian stages an “Assyrian” narrator who describes the temple of “Assyrian Hera” at Hierapolis for a Greek audience. In this second-century Greek text, the narrator significantly indicates that Syrians, whom he describes in archaizing terms as “Assyrians,” had integrated Greek narratives into their aetiologies for their discretely (As)Syrian temple and rites. According to one account that Hierapolis’ priests told him, Dionysus had dedicated the original temple to Hera. Intriguingly, the narrator classifies this account as a “barbarian” one that generally agrees with those of Greeks. “Signs” (*sēmata*) for this foundation were stones, clothing, and ivory horns that Dionysus brought from “Ethiopia” and an inscription that Dionysus had dedicated, apparently in Greek. Moreover, sculptures of wooden men with large phalli that Greeks dedicated to Dionysus (*neuropasta*) also adorned the site.³³

Chapter 10 examines the ludic and parodic complexities of Lucian’s *On the Syrian Goddess* and its implications for contemporary Syrian cultural politics. But several points that it raises have bearing on Part I. The first is that Lucian’s testimony regarding the adoption and adaptation of Greek

³² As Ramelli (2009a) does for the fifth-century *Teaching of Addai*.

³³ *Syr. D.* 1, 11, 16. Lightfoot (2003) 334: Dionysian myth as “barbarian.” Lucian’s text simplifies the origins of objects. Lightfoot (2003) 363–74 (esp. 368–69).

narratives has parallels elsewhere in the Roman imperial Near East.³⁴ In the second-century Hauran, the villagers of Soada (*Soadēnoil/Soadeēneis*) became citizens of a new *polis*, perhaps Dionysias, and produced civic structures and monuments typifying Roman imperial Greek *poleis*. They boasted in a Greek inscription that Dionysus was their civic founder, but they still belonged to “tribes” that bore indigenous ancestral names and were perhaps clan-based even if acting in civic capacities.³⁵ The second point is that the cultural systems of Syria were dynamic. They transformed and integrated new idioms to accommodate shifting imperial contexts. The third is that Syrian culture(s), which this work defines as the varied accretions of idioms through which Syrians expressed Syrianness, often incorporated Greek idioms.³⁶ Syrian cultural expressions occupied a vast spectrum of diversity, were locally or regionally variable, and were not pegged solely to Near Eastern languages and practices. In Lucian’s account, the “barbarian” myths and “signs” (*sēmata*) for Dionysus’ foundation of Hierapolis’ temple, derived from Greek narratives, were integral to how priests and pilgrims expressed their (As)Syrian past. After all, signs are unstable and polyvalent; subjects give them new significance in different contexts or endow them simultaneously with multiple overlapping saliences.

With such complexities in mind, Part 1 explores the shifting formations of the Syrian *ethnos* and Syria’s Greek *poleis* during the late Seleucid and early Roman imperial periods. It maps how ethnic Syrians became citizens of Greek *poleis*, how their expressions of Greekness integrated Near Eastern idioms, and how the Syrian *ethnos* fostered cognition of social (not ethnic) commonality amid Roman imperialism. It also delineates the diversity of cultural idioms that constituted Syrian culture(s) for the Syrian *ethnos*’ members. It thereby challenges the perspective that no Syrian culture existed in Roman imperial Syria.³⁷ This perspective premises that inhabitants of certain parts of Syria cultivated Aramaic dialects, “Semitic” onomastics, and Near Eastern material forms and practices in ways that imply continuity from pre-Hellenistic times. But as it correctly stresses, such continuity was not regionally consistent. Not all parts of Roman imperial Syria provide evidence for it, and when they do, different Near Eastern precedents (such as Aramean, Phoenician, and

³⁴ Inscriptions and coins at Nysa-Scythopolis accredit Dionysus as founder. Di Segni (1997) 140–43; Belayche (2009b) 174–79.

³⁵ Waddington (1870) 2307–9 (=IGR 3.1275–77), 2370: *phylē Somaithēnōn* and *Bitaiēnōn*. Sartre (1982) 85–86, (2001a) 644; MacAdam (1986) 71–74, 108–109, 122, 128 deem the tribes civic. Dentzer *et al.* (2010) 147–58 discuss Soada’s urban formation.

³⁶ Bowersock (1990) 7–9; Kaizer (2011) provide important analysis.

³⁷ Millar (1993a) 492–93, 523; Sartre (2008): 34–35.

neo-Hittite) can be accredited in varying localities. Many Syrian regions have even fielded written evidence only for Greek, not for Aramaic dialects. Also, inhabitants of Roman imperial Syria (unlike Jews) did not share common memories derived from Near Eastern precursors. Amid such lack of uniform cultural continuity and such regional heterogeneity, “Syrian” was merely a geographic label without social or cultural significance. Instead, Greek civic structures, historical narratives, and idioms that Roman imperialism facilitated constituted Syria’s only regionally coherent cultural formations.³⁸

The perspective described above significantly demonstrates how categories, narratives, and civic frameworks fostered by Roman imperialism and its patronage of Greek civic life impacted the Near East’s social identifications. But as Part I clarifies, it limits possibilities for discussing Syrian and other Near Eastern experiences of culture, historical pasts, or even indigeneity. Alternatives to this position have varied. One approach posits that a Greco-Roman veneer thinly disguised a true Near Eastern essence; it arbitrarily assumes continuities in Near Eastern material culture to signify persisting, uniform (and anachronistic) “Semitic” identity or nativist opposition.³⁹ Other approaches offer more refinement. One, for instance, stresses how provincials “resisted” full assimilation by cultivating local forms of artistic iconography amid broader acculturation.⁴⁰

More recently, scholars have treated how Syrians negotiated the tensions between imperial Greek or Roman traditions and Near Eastern practices. To this end, they have borrowed concepts from other academic fields addressing how entangled populations “translate” cultural idioms from different societies, embed them in new symbolic contexts, and interweave them. These include “mestizaje,” “hybridity,” “creolization,” and the “Middle Ground,” which often accompany references to the “Third Space,” or the practical realm between binary traditions in which processes of hybridity occur.⁴¹ In general terms, the first three concepts elucidate how different social segments interweave idioms of diverse origin amid contexts imbued by racial or ethnic hierarchies, economic exploitation, and disparities of power to create new cultural frameworks or symbolic worlds.

³⁸ Millar (1993a); (1998b); (1998c); (2006a); (2007a); (2007b); (2008); (2011) through diverse points of emphasis, significantly argues that the Roman empire’s dissemination of Greek narratives, civic structures, and culture foremost impacted documented historical memories, identities, and regional interactions.

³⁹ Ball (2000).

⁴⁰ Elsner (1997); (2001a). Sommer (2005a) 16–25, 391–402 examines the views of Millar, Ball, and Elsner.

⁴¹ Bhabha (1994) 115 theorizes the “Third Space.”

“The Middle Ground” describes contexts of interaction in which members of alternate societies enter into dialogic repositioning and engage in social practices “neither purely native nor entirely colonial imported.” By doing so, they generate mutual intelligibility and new cultural forms.⁴² Additional approaches stress how astute “boundary crossers” navigate among the parallel cultural systems of societies in contact. Many such perspectives are complementary. “Mestizaje” (*métissage*) and boundary crossing inform what one scholar labels “Syrian Hellenism.”⁴³

As implemented in their original fields, *mestizaje*, creolization, hybridity, and the Middle Ground differ noticeably, but they often assume similar implications in analyses of the Roman Near East. Their usage typically accompanies the treatment of Greek and Near Eastern cultures as static categories, and it often neglects transformations in how Greek culture was experienced and how Greek idioms became internal features of Syrianness, or Syrian cultural expressions. One example focusing on settlements of the “frontier” steppe of the Roman and Parthian empires should clarify. A recent study frames the steppe’s societies as inhabiting a “Third Space” (*Dritte Raum*) in which “creolization” (*Kreolisierung*) occurred. While challenging notions of syncretistic Greek–Near Eastern culture, it argues that within this “Third Space,” a practical field differing from those of the Greco-Roman and the Near Eastern societies preceding it, inhabitants of the eastern steppe frontier generated cultural contexts incorporating the symbolic elements of colonizing and colonized inhabitants. Distinct groups located at different points on a scale of power and hegemony operated and framed local identifications within this broader process.⁴⁴ During this period, Greek possessed “overt prestige,” and it was the nearly universal language of elites in Syria. Despite Aramaic’s previous status as a high language, the dominance of Greek relegated Aramaic to “covert prestige” and facilitated its fragmentation into various local dialects, such as Palmyrenean, Hatrean, and Syriac. Still, the elites of communities in which such languages emerged interwove them in different contexts to create new and innovative symbolic worlds and even to endow their local dialects with overt prestige.⁴⁵ Also, instead of adopting the institutional structures of

⁴² Sartre (2008) 41–43; *mestizaje* and parallel cultures. Hoffman (2011) 48–50, 55–56 on Dura-Europos: Middle Ground and hybridity. Hoffman follows Malkin (2002) 151–56, 171–72; (2005) 251; (2011) 45–48 (46 quoted) on archaic Greece and Gosden (2004) 82–114 on antiquity. Their point of reference is White (1991) 50–93.

⁴³ Sartre (2008) 26–28, 41–43. Also see Sartre (2001a) 14, 853–83; (2005) 3, 274–96.

⁴⁴ Sommer (2005a) 25–28; (2004b) 844. Webster (2001) 209–25; (2003) 24–51 examines “creolization” in the Roman empire.

⁴⁵ Sommer (2005a) 115–22 classifies Greek as a “high (H-variety) language” and Aramaic as a “low (L-variety) language,” but at Palmyra, Aramaic assumed H-variety status. For sake of concision, I

Greek *poleis*, many maintained patterns of dimorphism characterized by symbiosis, kinship ties, and certain shared social practice among sedentary populations and local nomads.⁴⁶

According to this interpretation, the Greco-Macedonians of Roman Syria, in line with prevalent Roman perspectives, replicated cultural hierarchies dictated by the polarization of the “center” (Rome) and the “periphery” (the Syrian steppe frontier). Such Greeks, often acquiring Roman citizenship, participated in the “Greater Tradition” of the center, which legitimated the “symbolic universes” (*symbolische Sinnwelten*) or “core-universe” (*Kern-Universum*) within which they operated. These universes were generally embedded in institutions of the Greek *polis* and the signage of Greek *paideia* (elite education or culture). By contrast, the Aramaic-speaking inhabitants represented the “Lesser Traditions” of the periphery, but as Aramaic-speaking veterans, skilled artisans and craftsmen, and elites from settled communities, including those of the steppe, gained access to the “Greater Tradition” of Greeks and Romans, they became “boundary crossers” (*Grenzgänger*) who inhabited the symbolic spaces of the “Greater Tradition” and the local “Lesser Traditions.”⁴⁷ Yet, Syrians, especially elites, did not merely produce “boundary crossers,” but they appropriated, “translated,” and “transculturated” symbols from both orders to create new symbolic universes, through which they framed various local identifications and cultures.⁴⁸ By doing so, they often espoused the prestige of their practices in ways that flouted the views of Roman authorities and the Greco-Macedonians that they privileged.

The approach just described implements sophisticated treatment of creolization, boundary crossing, the Third Space, asymmetries of power, the tensions and differing prestige values of the Greater and Lesser traditions, and the production of new symbolic universes. It also follows logic similar to many treatments of mestizaje, hybridity, and the Middle Ground. Such approaches stress the critical stance of provincials toward Roman imperialism or how they could stake positions of both complicity and critique amid its inherent imbalances of power. They show how imperial subjects could navigate among distinct cultural traditions, interweave their diverse idioms, and even produce new symbolic frameworks or cultural forms. But the same problem remains with their application. Defining the negative, they often frame Syrians as not quite Greek or Roman or render them as

hereafter generally describe Palmyrenean, Syriac, and other Aramaic dialects simply as “Aramaic,” but the social and linguistic differences of those who spoke them are noted.

⁴⁶ Sommer (2003b); (2004e); (2005b) also treats Hatra, Palmyra, and dimorphism.

⁴⁷ Sommer (2005a) 50–51, 84–87, 98–109, 403–4, with Sommer (2009) 237.

⁴⁸ Sommer (2005a) 102, 106–7, 403–4.

navigating between unchanging Greek/Roman and “indigenous” practices. For instance, hybridity, *mestizaje* (*métissage*), and creolization in other disciplines have been framed as processes that can destabilize binary cultural systems and experiences of their “authenticity” or “pure” fixity.⁴⁹ But in practice (if not intent), their ascription to the Roman Near East often entails identifying “mixed” or new forms deviating from “pure” or “fixed” cultural systems. Likewise, “boundary crossers” move between static cultural universes, from which cultural translators adopt idioms for “hybrid” enterprises. Even when scholars suggest that Syrians crafted unique ways of “being Greek,” they qualify this “Syrian Hellenism” as a “controlled schizophrenia” through which Syrians alternated between a uniform, normatively expressed Greek cultural identity and various local “native” ones.⁵⁰ Greeks were therefore diverse only inasmuch as they also expressed an array of separate “native” identities through various non-Greek idioms. In short, all such approaches situate provincials ambiguously between the immutable binary systems of the Greeks and “purely” indigenous, and their usage for most scenarios of cultural translation and interweaving compromise their heuristic utility.⁵¹

What this book suggests, by contrast, is that scholarship on the Roman Near East has often located Greek and Syrian culture (or their lack) in the wrong place. Scholars have examined whether Syrians produced a common culture anchored in a consistent set of Near Eastern idioms and Aramaic language use. They have anticipated that what ancients experienced as Greek culture or expressions of Greekness was static, and they have not entertained the variations, ones often inclusive of Greek idioms, with which Syrianness could be expressed. Because many Roman imperial Syrians deviated from “purely” Near Eastern and Greek practices, recent scholarship has denied that such Syrians cultivated Syrian culture or has cited hybridity and the like to mark this deviation.

As Part I maintains, different inhabitants of the Near East could express Syrian identification with different idioms. They could transform Greek idioms into Syrian culture and experience them as part of authentic Syrian expression. Such Syrian expression often intersected with articulations of civic Greekness within the *polis*. Not all ancient Syrians were “purists” who had to anchor their Syrian identification strictly in Syrian ethnic genealogy and Aramaic use or else disavow any social significance to being Syrian. As this study suggests, Syrians could posit links to a collective Aramean

⁴⁹ Stuart Hall (2003) 31–33; Bhabha (1994) 27, 115. ⁵⁰ Sartre (2008) 26–28, 41–43.

⁵¹ Palmie (2006); Larson (2009) 7–26 thus critique “creolization.”

or Assyrian past without cultivating idioms continuously transmitted from pre-Hellenistic periods (even if Jews did so articulately). For many, “Syrian” was a meaningful social category whose cultural assemblage was variable, and both ethnic Greeks and Syrians acted as members of a Syrian *ethnos*, a cognitively experienced regional collective defined by civic criteria. As such, they often posited common civic founders (if not ethnic ancestors). Moreover, (As)Syrian indigeneity or ethnicity could be expressed through Greek practices and narratives and intersect with Greek civic identification, just as Judeo-Christian narratives and historical memories (themselves sometimes informed by Greek strains) often constituted their basis in late antiquity.⁵² In other words, “Syrian,” whether ethnic or civic, was a meaningful label of social identification, one that could be expressed through Greek culture, narratives, and affiliations.

To comprehend the complexities of Greekness and Syrianness, it is important to understand how imperial processes shaped their social contexts and cultural dimensions. Seleucid and Roman imperialism were instrumental in determining the Syrian *ethnos*. Despite existing in preindustrial antiquity, the Seleucid and Roman empires shared features generally common to empires, especially “tributary ones,” whether ancient or modern, “western” or “eastern.”⁵³ As in most imperial systems, the authorities of the Seleucid and Roman empires endeavored to define “the constituents of a certain kind of society,” to make this society seem natural, and to present themselves as “nonpartisan” and “neutral” overseers and patrons. They also underwent shifting phases in the implementation of infrastructure, “the construction of power around the acquisition of knowledge,” resource and labor exploitation and organization, and the production of social categories.⁵⁴ Despite such commonality, the differing aims and justifications of the Seleucid and Roman empires had diverging impacts on Greekness’ transformations in Syria. These imperial systems differed in their propensity to “civilize” or spread Greek culture among the Near East’s inhabitants. They therefore prompted different reactions from subject populations.

In the Seleucid empire, the Greek *polis* and its institutions, civic structures, and modes of ideological production stabilized ethnic division. *Poleis* conferred Greek citizenship upon ethnic Greeks and not

⁵² Becker (2008); Wood (2010), esp. 178–83 (on John of Ephesus) discuss how these factors informed late antique formulations of Assyrian and Syrian pasts in Syriac.

⁵³ Bang (2008) treats Rome and similarly structured tributary empires.

⁵⁴ Cooper and Stoler (1997a) 11; Mattingly (2011) 7. Stoler and McGranahan (2007) 9 stress that imperial formations are not “steady states” but “states of becoming” and “ongoing politics of dislocation, dependent on refiguring spaces and populations.”

members of local ethnicities, even those who adopted Greek cultural idioms. Greco-Macedonian settlements likewise included only ethnic Greek settlers (*katoikoi*). The Seleucid monarchs never espoused a civilizing mission. They simply governed “spear-won land” by conquest.⁵⁵ After Greek colonists settled the Near East, they implemented socio-economic exploitation that impacted local culture but did not impose their cultural traditions. Instead, temple hierarchies governed their communities and maintained cult rites much as they had under the Achaemenid Persians. As chapter 1 argues, the Seleucid king Antiochus IV admitted Near Eastern ethnics into Syria’s Greek polities, which in turn expressed localizing forms of Greekness integrating Near Eastern idioms. But this was unique and impermanent.

Unlike the Seleucids, the Romans and their client kings reconstituted the Syrian *ethnos* as a social category and a cognitively experienced regional collective that encapsulated overlapping civic affiliations and varying cultural expressions. Under such conditions, inhabitants of the Near East integrated Greek or “hybrid” idioms into performances of Near Eastern social identification (such as Syrian, Phoenician, or Commagenian). As chapter 2 argues, Antiochus I of Commagene, Rome’s client, structured his kingdom as a social collective that embedded diverse ethnicities and hybrid idioms in new expressions of “authentic” Commagenian culture. This collective became the basis of Commagene’s regional polity network that would join the Syrian province(s).

Roman governance also integrated Near Eastern ethnics into Greek civic communities, which constituted the structuring principle of its Syrian *ethnos*. So chapter 3 emphasizes. Under the oversight of Roman governors and client dynasts, Greek city-states in Roman imperial Syria assembled and interwove the cultural traditions of Greece, Rome, and the Near East in ways that elided or obfuscated ethnic fissures. In this way, they both continued and complicated Seleucid Greek colonialism.⁵⁶ After Syria first became a Roman province, Roman magistrates and dynasts of varied ethnicity collaborated to found Greek city-states and make ethnic Syrians into citizens of both new and older Greek communities.⁵⁷ Beneath such prompting or even coercion, many local communities adopted and adapted

⁵⁵ Polyb. 5.67, 28.1.4; Austin (2003) 125, 129–30.

⁵⁶ The Roman empire exerted three models of colonialism outlined in Comaroff (1997) 179–81: “state colonialism,” (imperial governance), “settler colonialism” (implementation of settlers or patronage of settlers’ descendants), and “civilizing colonialism” (education of autochthonous populations). The Seleucid empire only exerted the first two models. My general references to imperialism encapsulate colonial processes.

⁵⁷ Likewise, De Jong (2007) for Roman, not Seleucid dating.

Greek *politeiai*. Amid this process, the conferment of Roman citizenship, Roman juridical intervention, and the establishment of Roman *coloniae* also affected Syrian culture and cult. Syrians and “Arabs” expressed attachment to Rome through Roman and local idioms.⁵⁸ Yet, the Syrian *ethnos*’ network of peer Greek *poleis* and its interweaving of Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern idioms constituted key organizing principles of Roman imperialism. As the Roman administration made this expanded network the basis of the Syrian *ethnos*, its provincial *koinon*, and its regional *koina*, Greek civic elites supervised by Roman magistrates eventually replaced client dynasts as arbiters of local affairs.

As Greek *politai* became a sub-category for a wider group of Syrians, the Greek peer polity network of Syria and, more broadly, the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos* maintained cognitive and performative commonality, even if it did not always enjoy political solidarity or engage in unified mass action. Within it, both ethnic Greeks and ethnic Syrians, whether speaking Greek or Aramaic, deemed ancient (As)Syrians/Arameans among their *ethnos*’ civic founders (if not ethnic ancestors), but their historical narratives were often informed by Greek influences and categories. In this sense, Syrians of the Roman imperial era, and even Assyrians or Arameans beyond the frontier, posited links to various ancient Greek or Syrian “founders,” with or without positing ethnic descent. Such “founders” included Dionysus, Ninus, Belus, Semiramis, Alexander, and Seleucus I, whom Greek narratives claimed to have shaped the incremental formation and shifting dimensions of the Syrian *ethnos* and its communities over time.⁵⁹

If Syrian cultural expressions in the Near East have often been misconstrued, so has the category of “Greek.” Despite increased recourse to

⁵⁸ Aliquot (2009), esp. 200–29, emphasizes how Romans’ worship of divine triads affected religious life in Lebanon. Bru (2011) examines how signs of imperial power structured Syria’s landscape. Kropp (2009a) 112–17 analyzes Qalaat Faqra (Lebanon), where imperial cult assumed local dimensions alongside cults to “Atargatis of the Arabs” and Zeus Beelgalasos (Rey-Coquais (1999) 632–40; Aliquot (2009) 261–67). Isaac (2009) treats Latin epigraphy.

⁵⁹ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 10–28, 39–40 shows how Syrian communities fashioned links to diverse Greek or Assyrian “civic founders,” such as Dionysus, Semiramis, Alexander, and Seleucus I. In *TEAD* 7–8, no. 907=*PAT* 1094–96, Pl. 33, from Dura-Europos, a Palmyrene celebrates Seleucus I in Aramaic. Even Libanius, *Or.* 11.59–68, which treats the Antiochenes as Greek descendants, briefly narrates that Semiramis founded their temple to Artemis. Belayche (2009b) examines “founders” in Palestine. Isidore of Charax 1, 5 (*GGM* 1.247, 250) links Semiramis to various constructions in Parthian Mesopotamia and Iran. If the *Apology of Ps.-Meliton* is a Syriac original, then it shows how Aramaic-speakers could harness a complex amalgamation of Greek and Near Eastern narratives to discuss Near Eastern peoples. See Lightfoot (2007). A late antique Syriac text written in Sasanian Kirkuk could, like late Hellenistic or Roman imperial Greek historiography (Diod. Sic. 6.1.10), treat Belus as an ancient Assyrian king while also attributing the foundation of a local city to Seleucus I. *AMSS* 2.507–11.

hybridity, the Middle Ground, and creolization to describe many Syrians' cultural practices, most scholars still posit essentializing beliefs about Greekness and Near Eastern social identifications and therefore lapse into syncretism. In other academic fields, these concepts facilitate scrutiny of how binary cultural categories were produced and transformed in complex social contexts. But the prevailing tendency is to state or imply that "true" Greekness was situated in classical Greek paradigms and that Greeks or Syrians who cultivated Near Eastern cultural traditions had departed from Greek behaviors. It is to indicate that any meaningful Syrianness or Syrian social identification, whether ethnic or civic, could not exist amid the proliferation of Greek civic structures and idioms. Yet, Syrians expressed Greekness and Syrianness by interweaving idioms of diverse origins within a vast spectrum of local or regional variation. In fact, many exemplars of the Middle Ground, hybridity, or creolization in Syria performed as members of Greek civic communities and of an ancient (As)Syrian/Aramean *ethnos* that Roman imperialism had reconstituted. They produced new, intersecting expressions of Greekness and Syrianness amid local and regional engagements with the "globalizing" tendencies of Roman imperialism.⁶⁰ Alternatively, those not being Greek citizens still expressed Syrianness and crafted symbolic fields for various Near Eastern ethnic or social identifications.

As stated above, Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess* describes how Syrians could recreate Syrian expressions by integrating and reclassifying Greek idioms and narratives, such as "barbarian" myths of Dionysus. The geographer Strabo, from Pontus, similarly illustrates how Greekness could accommodate "barbarian" idioms. Despite references to "mixed Hellenes" or "mixed barbarians" in classical literature, Strabo claimed, "Who are the mixed? For even if people have intermixed, their prevailing element (*epikrateia*) has still made them either Greeks or barbarians. And we do not know a third mixed *genos* that is the 'mixed' one." He also affirmed that the "prevailing element" defining a people as Greek was the civic (*politikon*) and legal (*nomimon*) system of their Greek *poleis*, which sustained practices of *paideia* and rhetoric.⁶¹ In other words, the Greeks of Syria and other Near Eastern lands developed regulatory civic systems that differentiated between Greeks and philhellenizing ethnicities, even if social boundaries were nebulous or permeable. According to Strabo, those who cultivated

⁶⁰ Whitmarsh (2010a) 4–11 with bibliography, treats global and local, centralization and diversity, as mutually constituting categories that shaped provincial experiences of empire.

⁶¹ Strabo, 14.5.25; 1.4.9. The "mixed Greeks" near Hellenistic Olbia were villagers (not *politai*) who exhibited some Greek traits. *Syll.*³ 495 (line 114)=*SEG* 49.1041=*InsPE* 1.2.32 (B.17).

“mixed” cultural forms or harbored “mixed” ethnic genealogies were either Greek (and “other” types) or not Greek. They were not hybrids.

Greek collectives in Syria (Part II)

As just described, Greekness in Syria enjoyed many variations, and these variations are illuminated by an inscription raised by the civic council of Palmyra (Tadmor), a remote caravan city on the Syrian steppe. In 145 CE, the council erected numerous bilingual honorific inscriptions and statues for Soados, son of Boliades (𐤒𐤠𐤃𐤌 𐤁𐤓 𐤁𐤏𐤕𐤔). Found in Palmyra’s hinterland, one inscription from the group survives: its Greek is mostly preserved, its Palmyrenean Aramaic is fragmentary.⁶² It claims that Soados had so protected his fellow citizens’ caravans that Roman emperors and consular governors had praised him. He was also “the only of his citizens (*poleitōn*)” that his fatherland honored with statues at the city’s *tetradeion* (all four main sanctuaries). Finally, the inscription, in a reconstructed part, noted that Soados had dedicated a temple to the Augusti (*Sebastoi*) at Vologasias, a city near Babylon and the Persian gulf. Evidence for imperial cult worship at Palmyra supports this reconstruction.⁶³

Much can be said about the inscription’s content, its bearing on Soados’ career, and the complexities of Palmyrene society that it elicits. It is even debated whether Palmyra should be considered a Greek *polis*. Such issues receive specific treatment in Part II, which analyzes the polyvalence of Greekness in Roman imperial Syria and how it intersects meaningfully with Syrian culture(s). Soados’ honors cohered with those that euergetes received in Roman imperial Greek *poleis*, and as chapter 6 posits, they were embedded in a civic context in which elites earned praise for benefactions bestowed upon citizens of their Greek *politeia/plty*.⁶⁴ The bilingual (Greek-Palmyrenean Aramaic) document therefore did not merely mark distinct Greek and Palmyrene cultural systems, but it also indexed where they intersected and shared idioms.

In other words, the juxtaposition of Greek and Aramaic that typifies civic discourse at Palmyra made Aramaic integral to Greek *politeia* even when it also made Greek a means of local expression, a part of Palmyrene

⁶² *PAT* 1062 (line omitted)=Mouterde and Poidebard (1931) 104=SEG 7.135=Milik (1972) 13=Agora An.30.

⁶³ Kaizer (2002) 148–51; Bru (2011) 101–5.

⁶⁴ Millar (1993a) 332 stresses the significance of honorific inscriptions and statues. *PAT* 1378=Inv. 10.44=IP 16=Agora VI.18=IGLS 17.1.222: *poleitia/plty*. Compare *PAT* 2769=IGLS 17.1.149 (*politeuma*).

civic and elite culture. But Soados was also being honored because he had earned praise from Roman emperors and provincial governors of the Syrian *ethnos* and had oriented his fellow citizens toward imperial cult worship. It was indeed within a distinctly Greek civic framework that citizens like Soados, who spoke Aramaic and inhabited dimorphic clan networks, expressed subjecthood within the Roman imperial system and its Syrian *ethnos*. A Greek polity was where Greek citizenship, Roman imperial belonging, Syrian provincial status, and diverse Near Eastern ethnic and social affiliations intersected and integrated common signs. Palmyra exemplifies this entanglement.

The terms “Romanization” and “Hellenization” have endured recent critique and modification. In their unqualified state, they premise uniform dissemination of Italian or Greek idioms and neglect the discretion of provincial responses. Scholars have therefore introduced other terms to analyze the complexities of social practice and cultural expression in the Roman provinces. Creolization, the Third Space, and hybridity have already been discussed, but some have also described how imperial subjects enacted *bricolage* by rendering dynamic uses to old cultural practices as they combined them with newly introduced ones in shifting contexts.⁶⁵ Such formulations show how provincials (or Italians) negotiated the demands of imperial integration, often by interweaving local, regional, and imperial idioms to produce new cultural systems.⁶⁶ In this way, they navigated the encounter between the Greater and Lesser traditions. But as stated above, such approaches often render provincial cultures as produced by contact between elements of an immutable binary: the Greek/Roman and its “indigenous” counterparts. They describe a process, but frequently without expressing the reconstituted categories that it produced or how “indigenous” idioms even could become Greek or Roman culture.

One can analyze provincial cultures in other ways. Some historians have viewed the Roman empire as “a cultural system structured by systematic differences” or as characterized by “discrepant experiences.”⁶⁷ According to these perspectives, which are compatible with many previously described,⁶⁸ provincial subjects critically engaged and helped shape a coherent imperial cultural system. But while doing so, they also combined imperial and

⁶⁵ Terrenato (1998a), (1998b); Keay and Terrenato (2001); Roth (2007) 21–27, 143–44, 201–8.

⁶⁶ Webster (2001), (2003); Sommer (2005a) 25–27, (2004b) 844; creolization. Hoffman (2011) 48–50, 55–56; Middle Ground and hybridity, which Gosden (2004) 8, 82–113; Antonaccio (2003); Hodos (2006) 1–24 discuss for non-imperial interactions.

⁶⁷ Woolf (1998), esp. 7–23, 238–49 (242 quoted): systematic differences; Mattingly (1997a) 8–15, (2006) 15–18, (2011) 29–31; Barrett (1997) 59–63; discrepant experiences and identities.

⁶⁸ Roth (2007) 19–27, 206 analyzes Italy through systematic differences and *bricolage*.

“native” practices to produce new, unique, and diverse provincial cultures determined by their participation in imperial structures. This emphasis on systematic difference and discrepancy can also clarify how provincials reconstituted cultural categories. They enacted discrepant but structured experiences not only of the empire but also of Greekness and Romanness, of the idioms that expressed Greek or Roman identities.⁶⁹ They could even recast “native” idioms as Greek or Roman culture.

In Roman imperial Syria, the Greek *polis* and its enactment of *politeia* shaped discrepant performances of Greek and Roman culture. The Greek *polis* did not merely interweave Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern idioms, but it actually redefined how they were experienced. Sustained by Roman governance, it was a significant structuring force of the eastern empire’s discrepant social and cultural spaces. To what extent Syrians “became Roman” or “Greek” therefore cannot be measured by the dissemination of idioms often deemed Roman or Greek. One must ask how Syrians interwove diverse cultural idioms in circulation, embedded them in meaningful social categories and contexts, and performed Greekness or Romanness for scrutinizing audiences. Within the imperial system, Greek *poleis* constituted vectors and frameworks of signification in which Greek, Roman, Syrian provincial, and “indigenous” ethnic cultures were reconstituted.

The interior thoughts of Syrians regarding identity are unknown; social performance and what they signified for audiences in provincial “theaters” can be assessed.⁷⁰ Part II accordingly examines the social performances and cultural expressions of Greek *poleis*. Chapter 4 theorizes how civic councils, authorized by the Roman administration, exerted cultural hegemony over communities in ways that stimulated civic solidarities and generated expressions of Greekness sometimes departing from classical models. Chapters 5–7 present specific test cases for this theory, and they examine the civic lives of Antioch, Apamea, Gerasa, Palmyra, and Dura-Europos during the high Roman imperial period. But some preliminary explanation is useful here. Under the Seleucids and Romans, Greek *poleis* sometimes emerged in Near Eastern regions that temple hierarchies had administered under the Persians. In some instances, temple communities persisted throughout the Seleucid and Roman periods; in others, they assumed the ideological orientation of Greek *poleis*. These two models of social organization were not static, but they constituted discursive and performative

⁶⁹ Revell (2009) interprets Romanness (western empire) through the lenses of structuration, agency, and multiple variations of a broader discourse.

⁷⁰ Accordingly, my text analyzes performance and identification, not “identity” in all its “hard” and “soft” usages. Cooper and Brubaker (2005) 59–90.

frameworks that generated significant identifications, affiliations, and networks. As such, they underwent ceaseless change, and they integrated and recast heterogeneous cultural symbols, thereby charging them with new meanings. It is therefore difficult to define the Greek *polis* or even the temple community in universal terms. Despite this, Greek *poleis* exhibited certain enduring features during the Seleucid, Parthian, and Roman imperial periods.

The Greek *polis* was a community whose citizens were members of a Greek *politeia*, a word encapsulating the concepts of “constitution,” “civic order,” and “citizenship.” Eventually becoming the core structuring principle of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*, *poleis* formed a meaningful Greek peer polity network or “commonwealth” that generally coincided with Syria’s primary provincial *koinon* and regional *koina*. Even as citizens (*politai*) of Greek polities exerted less control over governance, they still constituted vital audiences for elite civic councilors (*bouleutai*) who governed. Because what constituted a Greek *politeia* under the Seleucids, Parthians, and Romans varied, this study does not treat a *polis* as Greek solely based on its institutional forms or cultural traits.⁷¹ It deems a community Greek when evidence indicates that its citizens reckoned it a collective Greek organism and solicited legitimation from other Greek city-states and imperial representatives. Such citizens engaged in performances that signified “Greekness” to their peer polity network or “commonwealth,” but what marked Greekness varied among specific contexts of interaction.⁷²

In Seleucid and Roman Syria, the Greek *polis* and its peer polity network provided stable criteria for expressing and authenticating Greekness. The Seleucid empire treated membership in a Greek *polis* or *katoikia* (settlement) as distinguishing Greeks from other ethnicities. This constant persisted under the Romans. Although the criteria necessary for recognition as a Greek *polis* changed over time, the transforming discourses and performances of Greek citizenship in Syria’s peer polity network or “commonwealth” were where Greeks and “others” located Greekness and the criteria for its legitimate expressions.

Recognition as a Greek *polis* and thereby inclusion in Syria’s Greek peer polity network or “commonwealth” reflected more than an awareness of

⁷¹ Seth Schwartz (1998). Communities sometimes became Greek *poleis* through an ideological reorientation in which they claimed Greek identifications while retaining local traditions and without necessarily the same standard institutions.

⁷² Peer polity networks, not simply a Greek “character,” determined Greek affiliations. Giovannini (1993); Ma (2003); Malkin (2003), (2011); Vlassopoulos (2007) shape my approach.

a community's general ethnic affiliation, acculturation, or organization as a socio-economic unit. It was an official status pregnant with ideological implications and connotations of legitimacy.⁷³ In some cases, imperial figures created Greek communities by establishing ethnic Greek settlements and endowing them with institutions or titles conveying Greekness to other Greek cities.⁷⁴ In others, imperial authorities conferred this rank upon "indigenous" communities whose elite authorities had reoriented their city's ideological axis in ways that created perceptions and experiences of civic Greekness. Although the status was authenticated among peers by recognition that ethnic lineages or social practices were sufficiently Greek, it also entailed the production of civic processes dictating how "Greekness" was conceptualized and performed. In fact, the *polis* did not eradicate all "indigenous" expressions, but it restructured them in ways that made them into intrinsic features of Greek civic life. Communities with various genealogical connections and socio-political traits thereby became Greek *poleis*, and their Greek expressions varied and transformed.⁷⁵ Chapter 7 analyzes how Greekness at Dura-Europos changed amid shifting imperial contexts.

In general terms, the following principles are key components of the dispositions that Part II examines. First, Greekness' fluidity under Roman imperialism enabled Syria's inhabitants to value their status as citizens of Greek collectives even while they enacted other ethnic and social affiliations, such as Syrian, Phoenician, or "Arab." The hegemonic mechanisms and civic-cultic rituals of Greek *poleis* integrated them into discrete collectivities, but they also prompted citizens to experience inclusion in various groups and networks defined by ethnic, cultural, linguistic, cultic, socio-economic, or gendered criteria.⁷⁶ In *poleis*, a complex web of group affiliations and relationship networks prevented Greekness (or Romanness or Syrianness) from being an essential and static category. Instead, the *polis*' framework of signification generated situational strategies that imperial subjects implemented as they navigated numerous overlapping collectivities and networks, including Syria's Greek peer polity network and, under the Romans, its primary *koinon* and regional *koina*.

⁷³ Woolf (1997) 3 regards the *polis* as an "ideological construct and political formation" whose self-aware status, and not necessarily its monuments, political offices, or population, distinguished it from *komai* (towns or villages). Similarly, Millar (1993b) 246–47.

⁷⁴ Grainger (1990) treats early Greek Seleucid settlements.

⁷⁵ Kaizer (2000) 221–22 stresses how societies domesticate foreign elements, but without generating homogenous unity.

⁷⁶ Rives (1995) 4 treats "collective identity" and "social identity" in North African Roman cities.

These strategies in turn shaped the *polis*' dispositional framework.⁷⁷ Individuals who engaged in performances of regional ethnicity or local kinship in one context could act as Greek or Roman citizens in another.⁷⁸ Such subjects were performing, presenting characters for diverse audiences. Moreover, because symbols are polyvalent, Greek or Near Eastern idioms could simultaneously express civic Greekness and alternate social identifications. Performances of "Greek" and "other" could intersect at once.

Second, unlike Syrians labeled "villagers" or "peasants" (*geōrgoi* or *kōmētai*), the *politai* of Roman imperial Greek cities, whatever their individual ethnic, social, or cultural features, were civic Greeks because they participated in hegemonic systems that the authority of organized municipal elites created and perpetuated. These elites controlled the city's resources, defined its official cults and civic-cultic calendar, and structured its urban spaces. They also negotiated with Roman imperial figures, who enforced Roman and local laws through their complicity. Civic elites shaped a discursive and performative framework, one elucidated foremost by epigraphy, that signified collective Greekness through diverse symbols even if subjects still endowed them with different meanings amid diverse practices. Continuities in Near Eastern material and visual culture, cult practice, or divine names did not necessarily signify denial of Greek identification.⁷⁹ In Greek *poleis*, these continuities operated in fields of signification that enabled "Greeks" to cultivate local customs while engaging in Greek civic performance. Such nuances instead differentiated the Greekness practiced by Syria's civic communities from those of the classical world and collapsed distinctions between the categories of "Greek" and "Syrian."⁸⁰ Many Syrian ethnics, whose assimilation to Greek culture varied, were Greek citizens.

Third, the forms of Greekness and Near Eastern affiliations expressed through Greek *politeia* had points of intersection and tension with other forms that scholars recognize more readily. In the heterogeneous cultures of Greek polities, issues of power and entanglement were at stake

⁷⁷ In this sense, the Greek city-state generated Bourdieu's *habitus*, the dispositional framework in which instinctive behaviors and strategic choices are structured. Bourdieu (1977) 78–87.

⁷⁸ Sartre (2008) 25–49; Sommer (2009) 245–46. Whitmarsh (2001b) 273, 305 frames identity as a contextual and strategic manifestation, not an essential state of being. Also, Kaizer (2002) 161 emphasizes the "individual," "familial," "tribal," "societal," and "civic" dimensions which single religious acts could take.

⁷⁹ Jones (1998) 129–35; Sommer (2004d) 204; De Jong (2007) 7–11 stress that materials and acts do not have fixed meanings.

⁸⁰ Kennedy (1999) 102–3 indicates that continuities in material or onomastic practices suggest that Syrians could distinguish themselves from practitioners of Hellenism elsewhere.

amid unequal social hierarchies. The voice of Greek *paideia*, like its Latin counterpart in the west, dominated the fairly homogenous literary culture of Rome's eastern provinces. A minority of erudite aristocratic citizens or (semi-)itinerant intellectuals produced it. Socio-economic disparities made it inaccessible to most inhabitants of the Near East. Inextricably "bound up with the articulation of Greek superiority,"⁸¹ it empowered Syrians who mastered it, but it replicated the marginalization and arguably the socio-economic oppression of others. By contrast, voices representing "purely Near Eastern" perspectives unaltered by Greek and Roman imperialism, if they existed, were suppressed by the socio-economic exploitation and discourses that the Roman empire and its Greek *paideia* implemented. While perhaps persisting among peasants and nomads, such voices are illuminated only by archaeology and select papyrus or epigraphic documents, with their own complications. But the encounter and entanglement of colonial and local traditions were manifested in additional innovative forms accessible to many non-elite Greeks and diverse Near Eastern ethnics. They were expressed through many ethnic and cultic performances of Near Eastern origin that translated Greek and Roman forms, including those of Jews, Christians, and worshippers of Mithras, Sol Invictus, Zeus Dolichenos (Jupiter Dolichenus), and Zeus Heliopolitanos (Jupiter Heliopolitanus). Finally, such innovative expressions emerged in the idioms of Greek *politeia*, or citizenship, through which Syrians of diverse ethnic origins and cultural features expressed new subjective forms of Greekness and Syrianness.

The voices represented by *paideia*, the peasantry, and *politeia* are analogous to the *présence européenne*, *présence africaine*, and *présence américaine* that scholars of Caribbean society have analyzed.⁸² These, while representing distinct categories of expression, can sometimes be emitted by the same people. The first concept refers to "the voice which is rarely ever not heard and which dominates above the others." Greek elites, sustained by Rome and dwelling in cities, engaged in socio-economic exploitation of the landscape and sculpted a symbolic universe that facilitated Roman imperialism and helped them maintain power and pre-eminence in the Near East. These were most likely to cultivate the relatively inaccessible forms of *paideia* that knit them to aristocrats throughout the Mediterranean. The second is the voice of the dispossessed that is suppressed,

⁸¹ Whitmarsh (2001a) 129.

⁸² Stuart Hall (2003) 31–33 (quoted in following text). Sommer (2005a) 25–28 uses these categories to analyze the language and culture of Greco-Macedonians, nomads, and Aramaic-speaking populations along the frontier.

reconstituted, or emitted subtly. The peasants and the nomads of the steppe frontier perhaps preserved oral traditions and engaged in little cultural translation. If they replicated “pure” Near Eastern traditions, these are hard to detect, except perhaps in material sources. The Aramaic-speaking population, which had established sedentary communities in Syria before Alexander’s conquests, largely endured marginalization. Under Greek rule, it farmed the countryside from which Greek polities or landlords extracted sustenance or wealth rendered in taxes or rents.⁸³ Under the Romans, this situation persisted for many (but not all) indigenous peasants. Finally, the third represents the site of “cultural miscegenation” and entanglement where the local exerts destabilizing force. During Roman rule, Near Eastern ethnics, including peasants and even nomads, increasingly joined Greek civic folds and engaged in complex performances of Greekness and Syrianness or, if not, they sometimes adopted civic discourse for village life. Such effects of *politeia* are evident in the documentary and material record.

As the example of *Samya/sēmeion* indicates, Syrians could craft new, discrepant forms of Greekness because “the meaning and symbols of culture” have “no primordial unity or fixity; the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized, and read anew.”⁸⁴ Scholars of colonialism and imperialism from diverse disciplines have in fact noted that whether cultures or identities are manifested in spoken language, written texts, or materials, they are neither “unitary” nor “simply dualistic” even if practitioners describe them as such. Their hybrid forms can be experienced as fixed, as parts of a unified culture with definitive origins, but they constantly assume new present meanings.⁸⁵ In Roman imperial Syria, cultural symbols of Greek city-states acquired their “identity” and “truthfulness” within the practical contexts and fields of signification in which they were produced and then charged with values that could at once signify multiple, overlapping social categories.⁸⁶ It is not enough to map the imported or indigenous binary traditions informing Syrian cultural practice. The *polis*’ discrepancy in mediating and destabilizing binaries, in forging provincial culture, and in redefining Greekness must be examined. As chapter 6 maintains, such discrepancy enabled Aramaic-speaking Palmyrenes like Soados to sustain a Greek *politeia*, and this *politeia* so integrated Near Eastern

⁸³ Sommer (2005a) 27, 87, 403. ⁸⁴ Bhabha (1994) 37. Similarly, Asad (1993) 13.

⁸⁵ Bhabha (1994) 37. Thomas (2002) 182–83 describes how objects “text.” Local agents read and reformulate the meanings with which objects have been charged in prior contexts. Buell (2005) 8–10, 13–21 frames ethnicity, race, and culture as fluid but experienced as fixed.

⁸⁶ Asad (1993) 53.

idioms that its members used bilingual honors to celebrate caravan patrons as exemplary citizens.

“Imitation Greeks”: being Greek and being other (Part III)

In 69 CE, the future emperor Vespasian visited the mountain of Carmel, located at the threshold of Syro-Phoenicia and Judea, to consult its god. The god was conspicuously foreign. Greeks and Romans typically endowed their divinities with human likenesses, but Carmel’s god was formless. According to the Roman senator Tacitus, the god had an altar, but no likeness or sanctuary.⁸⁷ Such discourse on Syrian aniconism typifies Roman imperial literature.⁸⁸ So does the notion that Syrians cultivated slavishness, androgyny, eunuchism, and immoderation.⁸⁹ These tropes shaped the Greek and Roman discourse on the emperor Elagabalus, whom sources rendered a lascivious androgyne worshipping a rock-shaped god named Elagabal.⁹⁰ Coins and a dedication found near Emesa verify Elagabal’s rock form, and as Herodian stressed, his *agalma*, not wrought in a coherent likeness, defied Greek and Roman norms.⁹¹ Elagabalus’ lascivious sex life and androgyny are harder to verify.

The Syrian stereotypes that Greeks and Romans crafted receive treatment throughout this work. Their degree of accuracy is not strictly relevant. Some Syrians, for instance, venerated stones or Lucian’s formless, polyvalent *sēmeion*. Some perhaps engaged in the sexual deviance for which Syrians were famous. But noteworthy is the homogenizing effect that such discourses had on Syrians of the Roman imperial era, as they did on other ethnicities and provincial societies.⁹² Syria in fact hosted an array of cultural and religious practices, including the worship of human-shaped gods. But imperial literature still generated “knowledge” of Syrians as a standard type with little variation. Greeks and Romans in fact rendered them inexorably foreign, even as imperial power-holders organized and expanded a Greek civic “commonwealth” in Syria. Roman Italians and inhabitants of classical Greek lands trafficked in this knowledge, which helped facilitate their ability to inhabit positions at the imperial hierarchy’s summit. Provincials who navigated the imperial aristocracy therefore often “became” Greek or Roman in classical ways while authenticating the

⁸⁷ Tac., *Hist.* 2.78.

⁸⁸ Gaifman (2008). Millar (1993a) 269–70 describes Carmel and the cult statues there.

⁸⁹ Andrade (2012) provides examination. ⁹⁰ Sommer (2004c) 100–10; Icks (2012) 92–122.

⁹¹ Hdn. 5.3.5; Stucky (1976) for statue.

⁹² Isaac (2004); Krebs (2011) treats “borealism” (not orientalism!) among Latin authors.

barbarian qualities of provinces. Herodian, a provincial and perhaps even Syrian, therefore assumed a typical Greek position while exoticizing the Syrians (chapter 11).⁹³

As recent scholarship has stressed, imperial Greek and Latin literature contributed to an accumulated knowledge of provincial landscapes. This literature and its knowledge were firmly implicated and complicit in the Roman imperial formation. They both in fact substantiated the broader imperial discourses and hierarchies by which they were informed, even when critiquing the empire.⁹⁴ Because the mechanisms of Roman governance had defined and stabilized what the contemporary Syrian *ethnos* and its Greek commonwealth were, they shaped what was “knowable” about them. Greek and Roman authors in turn operated within and bolstered this framework of knowledge, but with a notable twist. They diligently policed the proper boundaries of Greekness and Romanness, and they classified as barbarian the regions in which imperial governance had overseen Greek civic life and facilitated varied levels of assimilation. In fact, even Roman governors who patronized Near Eastern Greek polities, such as Cicero and Hadrian, could authenticate the prevailing knowledge that the Near East was a barbarian space.

Some Romans and Greeks recognized individual instances of assimilated Syrians. Sources attest that Syrians were senators, Roman administrators, or practitioners of Greek *paideia*.⁹⁵ As recent scholarship has also stressed, Greeks and Romans could posit remote connections to “others,” engage in reciprocity and cultural adaptation with them, or classify them in favorable ways.⁹⁶ But such trends did not negate the asymmetries of power and status stabilized by the production of imperial knowledge. Chapter 8 maintains that Greek and Roman imperial authors, especially those associated with the “Second Sophistic,” treated Near Eastern societies as discrete units with definitive characteristics and therefore accused “assimilated” Syrians and Cilicians of concealing barbarian traits. Dio of Prusa’s *First Tarsian Oration*, for instance, treats the Tarsians as sexually depraved (Syro-)Phoenicians posing as Greeks.

Centers and peripheries are unstable and often defy easy definition. Because complex webs of power and hierarchy define imperial formations, modeling them can yield oversimplification or be inappropriate.⁹⁷

⁹³ Herodian’s provincial origins are however notably uncertain. Sidebottom (2007) 79.

⁹⁴ König and Whitmarsh (2007), 3–39.

⁹⁵ Alföldy (1977) 318–22; Bowersock (1982); Leunissen (1989) 46–48, 366–70.

⁹⁶ Gruen (1998); (2002); (2006); (2011b), among his other works, stresses this element.

⁹⁷ Isaac (2011) significantly critiques core–periphery concepts; Bang and Bayly (2011) 4 define empires as complex networks.

Various people and places can simultaneously be more and less “central” than others, for different socio-political or economic reasons. Still, inhabitants of imperial systems often endure the experience (if not material conditions) of multiple overlapping, networking centers and peripheries.⁹⁸ Moreover, they can view certain nodes as sites of legitimate political governance or authentic culture and set them in contrast to a sliding scale of political or cultural “peripheries.” Such perceptions, and not those of economic “cores,” govern this work’s discussion of “centers” and “peripheries.” While classical Greek lands were politically subordinate to Italy and provided resources for the militarized frontier, the mainstream imperial narrative espoused their cultural primacy.⁹⁹ By contrast, even as frontier provinces notably assumed political importance, consumed imperial resources, and produced “assimilated” elites, they were still reckoned marginal cultural spaces. In other words, the Roman empire’s mapping of space and its accumulated knowledge of internal “barbarians” vaunted the socio-political and cultural primacy of Rome and Italy, but they also advocated the cultural pre-eminence of classical Greece. Roman aristocrats, Greek sophists, and residents of Italy and Greece therefore bolstered the knowledge that their cultural practices were most authentically Greek or Roman. Provincials were to become “cultured” by adopting their traditions, replicating such knowledge, and oftentimes migrating to classical centers.

Some Syrians assimilated to classical norms; others reinvented Greekness and Romanness. In turn, Roman imperial authorities and Greek intellectuals rendered them all “imitation Greeks.” While claiming credit for making Syrians into Greeks, they simultaneously inscribed them with immutable “barbarian” characteristics to foreground their own Greekness and Romanness.¹⁰⁰ This contradiction, one which imperial authorities, sophists, and Syrians negotiated from different positions of power, constituted a “colonial mimicry.” It created the image of a “reformed, recognizable Other” that was “almost the same, but not quite.”¹⁰¹ Being both mimic and

⁹⁸ Imperial systems or states often map notional (if not actual) centers of political power and cultural legitimacy onto people and places, despite the presence of multiple relational nodes and contradictions. Geertz (1983) 121–46; Foucault (1980) 61–77, (2007) 1–27 are useful.

⁹⁹ Hopkins (2009) surveys Roman taxation and distribution. Pollard (2000) 171–212 treats Syria.

¹⁰⁰ Likewise, Bhabha (1994) 86. “The artifice of identity” is produced “in relation to an otherness” or an “external object” (44–45). Never pre-given, it arises when a subject recognizes itself in an “alienating” image (77), and the split between the subject and the “other self” marks where difference, identity, and otherness are produced.

¹⁰¹ A “mimic man” is produced by a “flawed colonial mimesis, in which to be Anglicized is emphatically not to be English.” Bhabha (1994) 87. Isaac (2004) 335–51 examines Syrian and Phoenician stereotypes.

menace, Syrians marked a paradox of Roman imperialism and the “civilizing” process that justified it. Under Roman governance, Syrians generated forms of Greekness (and later Romanness) ranging from exact imitation to excess, slippage, translation, or reconstitution of classical models. But amid such variation and even assimilation, inhabitants of classical Greek lands and Italy often maintained that Syrians were not truly Greek or Roman. Instead, they merely posed as such. Even when Syrians were Roman citizens, they were imitations inhabiting the nebulous threshold between being imperial subjects and members of a commonwealth.¹⁰² Critics could therefore challenge the legitimacy of “assimilated” individuals through rhetorical strategies endowing them with stable traits that the Syrian *ethnos* allegedly possessed.¹⁰³

The imperial knowledge of Greeks and Romans regarding Syrians was not uncontested. In the “globalizing” context of Roman imperialism, Syrians challenged how Greek and Roman imperial authors, governors, and actors organized and authorized knowledge while claiming the centrality of classical lands and practices. In short, they produced knowledge of their own. Such knowledge was not necessarily divorced in entirety from imperial narratives, and it did not reflect a perspective of “purely” Near Eastern origin. The impetus of imperialism in many ways shaped this knowledge and its various forms, and it arguably even informed Judeo-Christian texts that opposed or negated imperial narratives by emphasizing pre-Hellenistic precursors or apocalyptic visions. But even if Syrians often perpetuated key imperial principles, their adoption and adaptation of imperial themes facilitated their critical engagement of the knowledge and narratives of centrality that Roman authorities and Greek intellectuals had accumulated. It also enabled them to produce distinctly local or regional knowledge regarding Syrianness, Greekness, or eventually Romanness. This work cannot analyze the Judeo-Christian texts, some in Hebrew or Aramaic, within which variations of this knowledge can be detected. But chapter 9 discusses how Lucian’s corpus illuminates such knowledge, and chapter 10 does so for *On the Syrian Goddess*. With the Syrian Christians Tatian and Justin Martyr, Lucian critiqued the authority of Greek classical *paideia* and Roman hegemony in ways that challenged imperial formulations of center and periphery and premises of Greekness as a static, universal, and classical constant.

¹⁰² Cooper (2007) explores similar ambiguities in the French colonial empire (or commonwealth).

¹⁰³ Lucian’s Syrian narrators/characters often navigate such challenges. See chapter 10.

Despite their critics, Syrians produced discrete but intersecting categories of Greekness and Syrianness within which they located their socio-cultural identifications. Emphases on creolization, hybridity, and the like often occlude these complexities. Many Syrians of Greek cities did not perform as hybrids but as Greek and Syrian, with various vectors of sameness and difference from other Greeks and Syrians. They did not necessarily experience deviation from ideal or originary Greek or Near Eastern models even as their civic and cultural categories underwent constant redefinition. Islamic Britons who speak Arabic or other languages of south/southwest Asia and frequent a mosque can integrate such social performances into expressions of Britishness, along with Islamic, Arabic, or various national or ethnic identifications.¹⁰⁴ Latino or Hispanic populations in the United States can embed Spanish speech in different modes of American performance while deeming it central to Hispanic/Latino culture(s). Despite opposition, certain Africans of the French colonial empire claimed French ideals of citizenship while inhabiting distinct racial, social, or religious categories.¹⁰⁵

Such navigations demonstrate that cultural and civic categories are negotiable, and this is why scholars of the Near East should resist formulations that stabilize the oppositional binary of Greek (or Greco-Roman) and Near Eastern (or its regional/social units). Social subjects can consciously and unconsciously redefine cultural categories, reconstitute them, and make them intersect, entangle, or diverge. As this study argues, civic affiliations also can alter what cultural idioms signify or change what “culture” is. Certain Syrians therefore re-inscribed Aramaic speech and Near Eastern cultural symbols as expressions of civic Greekness and Romanness, even while maintaining other ethnic, cultural, or social bonds. The “enunciations” of culture through which Syrians redefined sameness and difference empowered Syria’s inhabitants to navigate the nebulous divide between colonizer and colonized and to frame similarity and difference from

¹⁰⁴ Asad (1993) 243–48, 260–68 examines how British authorities defined British culture, identity, and national community during the Salmon Rushdie affair (late 1980s). As Dench (2005) 157 (including n. 14) observes, Cicero postulates the “plural Italian nature of ‘Roman’ culture and the limitations of this plurality” in ways mirroring how the British government reckons English, Welsh, and Scottish Gaelic, but not Punjabi or Hindi, to be legitimate “British” languages.

¹⁰⁵ Diouf (1998) examines complex and “hybrid” expressions of French citizenship, which were in themselves “not culturally French” (675), in colonial Senegal. Cooper (2009) examines how culturally multiform concepts and expressions of French nationalism and citizenship could be among Africans in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century French overseas empire (or republic).

inhabitants of classical Greek lands.¹⁰⁶ These expressions even emboldened Syrians to assert their forms of Greekness and eventually Romanness to be as legitimate and “central” as classical ones. Indeed, as chapter 11 argues, such subjectivity enabled the third-century Palmyrenes to exert an agency that situated them at the center of their own Greek and Roman imperial terrain.¹⁰⁷

Conclusion

The introduction began with Lucian’s polyvalent “sign” (*sēmeion*). With it, it now ends. The “sign” highlights how a Syrian could signify diverse but intersecting categories of Greekness, Syrianness, and other social affiliations all at once through the same standard idioms. It also reflects how various Syrians could express all these identifications through different interweavings of Greek and Near Eastern symbols. To ascribe cultural performance to or between static, codified categories occludes the diversity of experiences that ancient practitioners had. What scholars have classified uniformly as Greek culture, Near Eastern practice, and “creolization” or “hybridity,” Syrians could experience variously or simultaneously as “Greek,” “Syrian,” and numerous other categories. The creation of a Third Space or Middle Ground was in fact an unceasing process in which transforming discursive systems created new, coterminous categories of Greek and Syrian performance through a *mimēsis* (imitation) involving repetition and innovation. This process enabled shifting categories of Syrianness to integrate Greek idioms and Greekness to integrate Near Eastern ones. Syrians perhaps did not exert continual political solidarity or mass action, and they negotiated Roman imperialism from different vantage points. But their experience of a Syrian *ethnos* integrating discrepant forms of Greekness and Romanness eventually destabilized the centrality of Athens and Rome as exemplars of Greek and Roman culture.

In fact, the polyvalence of Lucian’s sign (*sēmeion*) encapsulates what made the Roman empire both dynamic and destructive. By incorporating ethnic Syrians into Greek *poleis*, Roman imperialism incited Syrians to experience vast social transformations, new opportunities, and a creative, dynamic cultural world. But it also deprived them of historical narratives and cultural categories beyond the Roman imperial Greek *polis*’ hegemonic

¹⁰⁶ Cooper and Stoler (1997a). Colonial projects do not merely create a “Manichaean” dichotomy between colonizing and colonized groups but instead facilitate complex interactions characterized by “hybridities,” “variation,” and different locations in a power spectrum.

¹⁰⁷ Asad (1993) 16 distinguishes between “agents” (effective action) and “subjects” (self-aware).

structures and significations. As a result, local traditions died, disappeared from the material record, or were reconstituted by transforming frameworks of Greek *politeia* or *paideia*. Rome exemplified a huge capacity to destroy and recreate. This study examines how the polyvalent *sēmeion* or “sign” celebrated by Lucian invokes this life, this death, in Roman Syria.

*Antiochus IV and the limits of Greekness under
the Seleucids (175–63 BCE)*

“And the king wrote to all his kingdom that all were to become one people and that each was to abandon his own customs.”¹ So the author of 1 Maccabees commented on the prohibitions that Antiochus IV, otherwise known as *Theos Epíphanēs* (manifest god), imposed on the Jewish cult of Jerusalem in 167. Written *c.* 100 BCE, the statement addressed the tribulations that Jews endured amid Antiochus’ brutal oppression generations earlier.² But to arrive at this perspective, 1 Maccabees also apparently conflated Antiochus’ suppression of the Jewish cult and his prior patronage of a gymnasium. Early in his reign, Antiochus notably collaborated with certain Jews of Jerusalem to establish a Greek *politeia* of “Antiochenes” and a gymnastic order. Generations later, the accounts of 1 Maccabees and 2 Maccabees placed Antiochus’ oppression of the Jewish cult in 167 in implicit continuity with his patronage of Antiochenes. They depicted Antiochus as continually endeavoring to replace Jewish tradition with Greek norms patronized by the Seleucid authorities. This continuum is not widely accepted. Scholars now generally dissociate Antiochus’ patronage of a gymnasium of Antiochenes at Jerusalem from his subsequent oppression of the Jewish cult.³ They certainly doubt that Antiochus tried to create “one people.”

Yet, even when analyzed in isolation, Antiochus’ patronage of the “Antiochenes” of Jerusalem must be reckoned an innovative departure from previous Seleucid practice. As this chapter discusses, accumulated data has prompted many scholars to regard Greeks and the indigenous people of the Seleucid empire as generally inhabiting separate civic or political communities.⁴ These divisions were not impenetrable. Greeks and Near Eastern ethnics often shared urban landscapes or adopted cultural

¹ Macc. 1:41–42. ² Goldstein (1976) 62; Bartlett (1998) 18–19 give date.

³ Mittag (2006) 139–145, 201–8, 225–81, with bibliography: Mendels (2009).

⁴ Austin (2003) 129–31 provides summary.

elements from each other,⁵ and the term “Hellenization” does not capture the diversity of Seleucid imperial space or levels of variation in its inhabitants’ engagement of Greek culture (or lack thereof). But the Seleucid empire noticeably stabilized civic distinctions between Greeks and other ethnics. Within such an imperial context, Antiochus’ patronage of Near Eastern communities as Greek *poleis* was unique, and the cultural implications of this innovation have not received full exploration.

For such reasons, this chapter stresses two points. First, Antiochus’ patronage of a Greek community of Jews deviated from the Seleucid empire’s conventional cultural politics. Little evidence indicates that the empire facilitated or assented to the routine integration of local ethnic populations into Greek communities, or that ethnic Greeks regularly recognized the Greekness of acculturated Near Eastern ethnics. Despite exceptions, the Seleucid empire and its governing structure maintained ethnic segmentation. Most Greek or Greco-Macedonian communities extended citizenship only to ethnic Greeks (including Greek Macedonians),⁶ and most Near Eastern temple communities or settlements did not pursue recognition as Greek *poleis* from other Greek communities or the Seleucid administration. Antiochus’ treatment of the Jews of Jerusalem therefore departed from Seleucid practice and instead foreshadowed a process that defined Roman imperialism centuries later.⁷

Second, during his reign Antiochus permitted or prompted numerous Greek *poleis* to issue largely unprecedented municipal coins. Some of these coins bore legends and images of heterogeneous cultural origin. As the introduction notes, scholars are increasingly interpreting such phenomena in terms of creolization, hybridity, the Middle Ground, and the like. But in context such coins also reconstituted civic Greekness in ways that integrated Near Eastern idioms and celebrated minting cities’ alternative ethnic or social ties. These coins therefore highlight the un-classical variations with which various imperial subjects could experience Greekness, and they show how Near Eastern social or ethnic affiliations could be conveyed through Greek symbols. The coins therefore mark where discretely Greek and Near Eastern sign universes intersected and harnessed the same potent idioms. They also suggest that Antiochus’ patronage of Greek civic communities populated by Near Eastern ethnics facilitated many variations of Greekness.

⁵ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993) 165–70; Martinez-Sève (2009).

⁶ By the late Seleucid period, Macedonians were largely reckoned among the empire’s Greeks. Burstein (2003) 229–34. This chapter’s use of the term “Greek” includes Macedonians.

⁷ Burstein (2003) 239–40 locates this shift after 188 BCE.

Antiochus truly did not try to create “one people;” he did not even patronize one type of Greek.

For these reasons, Antiochus’ interactions with Greek city-states and Near Eastern temple communities mark a shift in the Seleucid empire’s cultural politics. While scholars have elucidated problems that dynastic succession, civil war, intensified conflict with the Ptolemies, and the Maccabean revolt posed for Antiochus IV and his successors, this chapter studies different aspects of his reign.⁸ Epigraphic and cuneiform evidence highlight the ethnic segmentation that characterized the Seleucid empire before Antiochus ascended the throne. But after the Seleucid empire incurred substantial losses in territory, manpower, and resources through the treaty of Apamea in 188 BCE, Antiochus introduced several notable innovations to stimulate expressions of Greek civic identification among diverse ethnicities and to consolidate a Greek peer polity network in Syria, Phoenicia, and Cilicia. His support for the integration of members of various Near Eastern ethnicities into Greek civic polities was one of them. His endorsement of the municipal coins that Greek city-states minted was another. Such novelties in the organization of Greek polities and their production of coins prompted certain imperial subjects to express forms of Greekness imbued with Near Eastern idioms. But Antiochus’ innovations only met limited success and were curtailed by other factors. As indicated by 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees (an epitome of a work of Jason of Cyrene), Polybius, and Josephus, Antiochus’ bureaucracy also intervened in the affairs of Greek civic polities and temple communities in ways that contributed to rebellions and the Seleucid empire’s fragmentation. Instead, the Romans would complete the integration of Syrian and Near Eastern ethnics into a cohesive network of Greek citizen bodies that expressed innovative forms of Greekness.

Antiochus and his empire

During his reign (175–164 BCE), Antiochus IV tried to finish the temple of Zeus Olympius at Athens, which had been unfinished for centuries.⁹ By doing so, he expressed his veneration of Zeus Olympius, his patron Greek deity, and he marked himself as an exemplar of Greek culture and kingship.¹⁰ Yet, the temple also exemplified the cultural idioms that Antiochus valued. Like many contemporary Greeks, he considered Athenian or classical forms of Greekness to be the most legitimate and authoritative.

⁸ Mittag (2006); Grainger (2010) 284–402.

⁹ Polyb. 26.1.11; Livy, 41.20.8; Strabo, 9.1.17.

¹⁰ Vit. 7.15. The Athenians elected Antiochus *archōn* directly before he assumed the throne, and they also erected statues of him in the *agora*. OGIS 248.

Athens' specific manifestation of Greek culture, however, differed from that of the Seleucid Near East. As king, Antiochus governed a collection of communities differentiated along ethnic lines, and these divisions replicated ethnic segmentation among Greeks, Syrians, and other peoples. As a result, Antiochus recognized subject ethnic communities as legitimate Greek cities when they interwove Greek and local customs, and his empire's Greek cities in turn expressed forms of civic Greekness that integrated local symbols. Still, despite these innovations, Antiochus' intervention in the governance of Greek *poleis* and temple communities contributed to his empire's fragmentation.

Antiochus ruled an empire whose Greek inhabitants distinguished themselves from Syrians, Babylonians, Jews, and other ethnicities. By the second century BCE, the Seleucid empire constituted a host of Greek settlements flourishing among diverse peoples.¹¹ While economic exploitation occurred, previous kings and local Greek settlers did not impose Greek language or cultural practices on locals.¹² The Near East's cities and villages, often governed by the temple organizations and priests that had flourished under the Persians, generated revenues that sustained Greek city-states (*poleis*), the royal bureaucracy's resources, or estates of kings and Greek elites.¹³ Seleucid administrators and local authorities of diverse ethnicity even used Near Eastern languages to serve logistical needs.¹⁴ In regions that it governed "directly," the Seleucid administration shaped imperial space through Greco-Macedonian settlement, the threat of military violence, regulatory bureaucratic measures, patronage of local institutions, and dissemination of ideological symbols, especially on coins.¹⁵ Whereas various rogue magistrates and client kings could exert much autonomy on the empire's peripheries, the governing structures or temple communities of various Near Eastern peoples otherwise wielded much authority in Seleucid space proper. This enabled them to fashion symbolic universes distinct from those of Greek cities. They recast the Greek symbols

¹¹ Capdetrey (2007) 87–133, which supersedes Bickerman (1939b), examines the Seleucid empire's diverse *ethnē*. Hannestad (2012) introduces the Greek settlements, including Apamea on the Euphrates (989–90), for which Abadie-Reynal and Gaborit (2003) provide surveys and excavations.

¹² Millar (1987) 131–32; Austin (2003) 130. Sherwin-White (1987) 30–31 treats Greek culture's limited penetration.

¹³ Millar (1987) 129–30. Wörrle (1975); *OGIS* 221, 225; *IGLS* 7.4028; Buckler and Robinson (1932) no. 1 constitute evidence in the Seleucid empire generally for royal (with *basilikoi laoi*), aristocratic, or temple estates, which peasants farmed and for which they provided revenue.

¹⁴ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1991) 78–79. Eshel and Kloner (1996) 3–4 present an Aramaic-inscribed ostrakon.

¹⁵ Ma (1999); Capdetrey (2007) 333–438 examine.

that penetrated their discursive landscapes as idioms of local power, not Greekness.¹⁶

Greek city-states of the Seleucid empire also exercised local governance. While Seleucid kings maintained the power to intervene with armies and officials, they interacted or negotiated with polities in ways that accommodated the self-sufficient activity of their institutions and their civic ideologies of autonomy.¹⁷ Such communities with official Greek *polis* rank possessed gymnasia, the pedagogical institutions that reinforced Greek identifications. The elites of these communities, trained in Greek culture (*paideia*) and athletics within the gymnasium, engaged in the distinctively Greek practice of competing in the nude while anointed with oil. They also participated in regional contests affirming ties of putative kinship (*syngeneia*) and cultural commonality.¹⁸ Such “peer polity” relations were enacted by embassies and inscribed “traveling” decrees that they carried among various polities to “renew” bonds of kinship and friendship. “Traveling” decrees and other forms of inter-communication generated experiences of shared culture and “international” community beyond Seleucid frontiers.¹⁹ Within the Seleucid empire, these forms of interaction strengthened Greek communities’ beliefs in their Greek descent. Temple communities did not send athletes or spectators to such contests.

Seleucid authorities and local Greeks sustained official distinctions between Greek and other ethnic communities even in landscapes shared by heterogeneous ethnicities. For instance, the priests of the Esagila temple at Babylon governed the Babylonian community, but local Greek colonists had their own civic administration replete with gymnasium and theater. Cuneiform texts from the second and first centuries BCE distinguished *Babilaya* (Babylonians) from *pulite*, the *pulite sa ina Babili* (*politai* who are in Babylon), or, as a document from 163–62 BCE shows, “the Greeks, as they are called, the *p[ulite]* . . . who anoint with oil just like the *pul[ite]* who are in Seleucia, the royal city.” This distinction was administrative

¹⁶ Temple organizations autonomously governed local communities and frequently obtained remission of tribute. Aperghis (2004) 108–13. Linssen (2004) 168 examines continuities in temple rituals at Babylon and Uruk.

¹⁷ Ma (1999) 25. The Seleucid king had to maintain the allegiance of numerous cities acting as self-governing, autonomous communities. Accordingly, the lopsided relationship between the king and individual cities was mitigated by a complex and somewhat equalizing dialogue. The king and his administration granted favors to cities, and cities incorporated the king’s patronage into their narratives of civic autonomy through public inscriptions and statues.

¹⁸ Giovannini (1993) 278–83. Gauthier and Hatzopoulos (1993) on the Beroia gymnasiarchy law explore conventional gymnastic practice.

¹⁹ Ma (2003) 14–15, 19–20, 23–33 examines these peer polity interactions and their contributions to shared “mental maps.”

and ethnic. The *Babilaya* were the city's Babylonian inhabitants, while the "*pulite*" were Greek citizens.²⁰

Within the Seleucid system, a Greek *polis* or a settlement (*katoikia*) of Greeks was a community whose members Seleucid kings and peer Greek communities recognized as ethnic Greeks. Although Greek cultural practices (including certain Macedonian ones) were vital expressions of communities' Greekness,²¹ Seleucid authorities and peer Greek audiences also had to accept their Greek (or Greco-Macedonian) genealogies. Membership in *katoikiai*, whether consisting of settled soldiers or otherwise, was linked to an assigned land allotment (*klēros*) that had been putatively transmitted to descendants by Greco-Macedonian ancestors.²² In Greek *poleis*, citizenship was likewise transmitted by paternity.²³ Despite fundamental differences in status and claims of self-governance, citizens of Greek *poleis* and members of *katoikiai* (*katoikoi/klērouchoi*—so-called because they possessed a land allotment called a *klēros*) both inherited their status as Greeks through patrilineal descent, and children of Greek fathers and Syrian mothers belonged to their father's community. People of varied backgrounds inhabited many such cities or settlements, and Greeks could adopt indigenous traditions and indigenous peoples could adopt Greek ones.²⁴ But only ethnic Greeks were citizens of Greek *poleis* or legitimate members of the Greek *katoikiai* that belonged to "royal land."²⁵ Syrians and Near Eastern ethnics variously maintained their traditional governing structures, were organized into *katoikiai* of their own, or simply paid rents or labored for Greek royals or other landlords (whether Greeks or "indigenous").²⁶ Accordingly, no *Europaioi*, Greek members of Dura-Europos, bear Aramaic names in Europos' epigraphic and papyrus documents under the Seleucids or Parthians, save for a few with "double" names.²⁷

²⁰ Boiy (2004) 194–95, 206–7; Van der Spek (1987) 67–69; Geller (1991) 1. Van der Spek (2009) 108–14 translates and analyzes the cuneiform document from 163/62 (although he posits that Babylonians possibly acquired Greek citizenship). Also, *IGSK* 65.99, 102.

²¹ At Laodicea in Syria, civic councilors were called *peliganes* according to Macedonian custom. *IGLS* 4.1261.

²² As Briant (1978) 91–92 notes, *klēroi* of land were distributed to Greco-Macedonian colonists, thereby ensuring that Greco-Macedonians functioned as an "ethno-class" with shared privileges. Cohen (1978) 47–51; Grainger (1990) 112–14 describe what constituted a *klēros*.

²³ The Seleucid data is not explicit, but the Ptolemaic-era constitution (late fourth century BCE) of Cyrene indicates that offspring of Cyrenean Greek men and Libyan women were citizens. *SEG* 9.1, lines 1–7.

²⁴ Martinez-Sève (2009) 136–37. ²⁵ Briant (1982); Cohen (1978) 85–86.

²⁶ Capdetrey (2007) 159, 164–65; Josephus, *AJ* 12.148–53 for non-Greek colonies. Wörle (1975); *OGIS* 221, 225; *IGLS* 7.4028; Buckler and Robinson (1932) no. 1 for estates in the Seleucid empire generally.

²⁷ Welles (1951) 270; see chapter 7. Josephus divides Parthian-era Seleucia on the Tigris into its Greco-Macedonian population and a faction of "Syrians" that is *empoliteuemenon*, a term that

The *katoikiai* that the Seleucids established, including the archaeologically rich one located at Jebel Khalid, stimulated complex cultural interactions and interweaving among varying social parties in local contexts. But they still apparently maintained administrative ethnic segmentation.²⁸ Such segmentation continued when a colony assumed a Greek *politeia* and, thereby, a self-governing civic body. Before Antiochus' reign, no evidence indicates that Greek colonies included local indigenous people in citizen bodies when they earned the rank of "*polis*."²⁹ The civic decree that promoted Tyriaion (Toriaion) to this status raises this possibility, but the inscription elicits more questions than answers. After 188 BCE, the Attalid Eumenes II promoted the Seleucid colony at Tyriaion in Phrygia to *polis* rank. Initially, the colony sent a petition to Eumenes requesting the status of *polis*, and Eumenes conferred it. Eumenes' decree, which the Greeks of Tyriaion inscribed on stone to document their status, granted the colonists (*katoikountes*) a constitution (*politeia*) and apparently mandated that the "natives living with them" (*synoikountes enchōrioi*) be united into a single *politeuma*, or citizen body.³⁰ The king also granted them a gymnasium and its *ephēbeion* of youths. Under the Seleucids and Attalids, it seems that the gymnasium and *ephēbeion*, not necessarily civic councils, were signature markers of Greek politics and the instruments through which Greeks reaffirmed shared customs and group affiliations.³¹

The *katoikoi* who became citizens of the Greek *polis* of Tyriaion consisted of Macedonians and Greeks, and their civic order may have included local Phrygians or Galatians. If so, these were probably soldiers.³² Because

apparently describes Syrians who were members of a separate civic body, or *politeuma*, as opposed to *sympoliteumenoι*, who would have exercised citizenship within the Greeks' *politeuma*. Josephus, *AJ* 18.372; Cohen (1978) 86.

²⁸ The settlement at Jebel Khalid was inhabited from the early third to first century BCE. Connor and Clarke (1996–97); Clarke *et al.* (2002); Wright (2011); Jackson (2011). Clarke (2006–07) 133–39; Jackson (2002) 123, (2006) 215–40, (2009); Jackson and Tidmarsh (2011) 515–18 discuss cultural interaction. Hannestad (2012) 991–92 provides useful synthesis.

²⁹ Members of a Greek colony could petition the king and receive *polis* status, often but not necessarily while adopting a dynastic epithet. Cohen (1978) 84. A Greek inscription from Failaka unfortunately does not clarify this issue. Petropoulou (2006).

³⁰ Jonnes and Riel (1997) 3–4, 8–10, who read (lines 19–20) *synoikountes en chōrioi*, indicate that *synoikountes* were active Greco-Macedonian soldiers, not local Phrygians. But Jonnes (2002) 1.86–89, no. 393 interprets *synoikountes enchōrioi* as describing "native" inhabitants, as Sartre (2009) 223–32 accepts.

³¹ Phoenician cities, the Greeks of Susa and Babylon, and Jews of Jerusalem under Antiochus IV developed gymnastic institutions but not a civic council (*boulē*) or yearly magistrates (*archontes*). Kennell (2006) catalogues gymnastic institutions in Greek cities.

³² Jonnes and Riel (1997) 3–4, lines 3, 50 (also Jonnes (2002) 1.86–89, no. 393). One member of the embassy petitioning Eumenes uniquely had the Galatian name Brennus. He was perhaps a soldier (Jonnes and Riel (1997) 12), but his ethnic genealogy is unknown. Note that *OGIS* 229.105 documents how Persian soldiers serving at Magnesia on the Sipylus earned citizenship at Smyrna.

the Greek settlers of Tyriaion had requested and earned *polis* status after their transfer from Seleucid to Attalid rule, it is possible that the Attalids were more disposed than the Seleucids to make local *enchōrioi* into a Greek *polis*' citizens. In any event, no strong evidence before Antiochus' reign indicates that the Seleucids practiced such inclusion. Under the Seleucids, Greek citizenship generally belonged to ethnic Greeks, with few exceptions.

Inscribing Hellenism: the performance of ethnic and cultural Greekness

In the Seleucid empire, putative Greek ancestry determined Greekness and citizenship. Because ethnicity is a cognitive construction, members of Near Eastern ethnicities perhaps at times claimed Greek lineage and kinship to become citizens of Greek civic orders. The Seleucid Greeks nonetheless policed Greek genealogies to ensure that ethnic Greeks were citizens of *poleis* or members of Greco-Macedonian *katoikiai*. They understood legitimate Greek *poleis* to be communities of ethnic Greeks that Alexander's successors had established. Because Greeks putatively received citizenship from these settlers by descent, they performed ethnicity in ways that enabled them to claim such lineages.

Epigraphic evidence indicates how local Greeks and their kings collaborated to define ethnic Greekness. For instance, under Seleucus II in the mid-third century BCE, the citizens of Smyrna granted equal citizenship to the colonists at Magnesia on the Sipylus so long as they were free and Greek (*Hellenes*).³³ The new citizens verified their status as free Greeks, presumably through witnesses, to delegated authorities from Magnesia, and these Magnesian authorities then deposited the register with Smyrna's record-keeper.³⁴ Although Near Eastern ethnics who had adopted Greek language and culture, accrued sympathetic witnesses, and constructed Greek patrilineal genealogies could have infiltrated the citizen role, the process in theory ensured that "free Greeks" (however identified) of Magnesia, being descended from Greeks, joined the civic tribes (*phylai*) at Smyrna.³⁵ Except for some Persian soldiers, Near Eastern "indigenous" did not become

³³ OGIS 229.46.

³⁴ OGIS 229.45–55, 101 stresses that the *grammateis* of Magnesia furnished documentation (*graphē*) for the colony's members to prove their Greek and free status. Smyrna's record-keeper (*grammatophylakis*) was then to deposit them in the public office. Further epigraphic evidence for archives (*chreophylakia*) in Seleucid or Parthian territory are IGSK 65.126, 130, 192 (Nippur, Uruk, and Susa).

³⁵ OGIS 229.53. Lape (2010) 192–203 discusses similar issues involving putative ethnic lineage, citizenship performance, and scrutiny at Athens.

citizens, regardless of their Greek cultural traits.³⁶ As seen above, soldiers sometimes experienced flexibility regarding Seleucid grants of citizen status in a *polis*.

Similarly, under Antiochus III (roughly 207–6 BCE), the Greek civic body of Antioch in Persis renewed its kinship (*syngeneia*) with the Magnesians on the Meander in an inscribed “traveling” decree that its ambassadors deposited at Magnesia. According to the inscription, the two citizen bodies shared kinship because Antiochus I had populated Antioch in Persis with Magnesians settlers.³⁷ When the Magnesians established “iso-Pythian” (*isopythios*) games for Artemis Leukophryene, they were supported by the king and fellow ethnic (*syngeneis*) Greeks, the Antiochenes, who were to send spectators and presumably athletes.³⁸ In fact, the Magnesians had previously sent an embassy to the Antiochenes with their own inscribed decree, and they had “renewed” and re-legitimated their *syngeneia* with them in ways stressing their common Greek descent.³⁹ These games attracted Greeks from the Seleucid empire’s eastern regions. The inscribed decree that the Antiochenes in Persis sent to Magnesia claimed that other Greek polities in Babylonia and Persis shared their willingness to participate in the games. Accordingly, although these “customs” involving games, cultic festivals, embassies, and relationships inscribed on stones were ritualized acts through which Greek communities reaffirmed commonality with other Greeks, they had to be interwoven with Greek ethnicity. In this case, the inscribed decree perpetuated the memory that the enrolled citizens of Antioch in Persis had Greek ancestry.⁴⁰

Despite significant interactions, the communities of Greeks and those of Near Eastern peoples in the Seleucid empire forged distinct symbolic worlds, through which they charged Greek and local symbols with divergent meanings.⁴¹ The ability for Seleucid administrators to wield military violence, disseminate imperial idioms, and form reciprocal bonds with local notables did not deter this. For instance, at Babylonian Uruk, where the presence of Greek settlers is still uncertain, many notable Urukians, such as Anu-uballit Kephalon, cultivated Greek personal names or patronyms,

³⁶ *OGIS* 229.105. Some Persians serving in the army eventually earned citizenship.

³⁷ *OGIS* 233.11, 15–18, 35 (*IGSK* 65.252); Kern (1900) no. 61; Rigsby (1996) no. 111. The edict’s copy was inscribed at Magnesia on the Meander.

³⁸ *OGIS* 231.9–28, 232.9–25 (Antiochus III’s and son’s decrees); *OGIS* 233.70, 76 (spectators). . Also, *IGSK* 65.250–51.

³⁹ *OGIS* 233.34–35.

⁴⁰ Likewise, the Amphyctionic Council defined a city of Antiochenes as “related to the Greeks” while distinguishing it from local Carians. *OGIS* 234.12–14.

⁴¹ Cities of Assyria hosting a Greek settlement/*polis* typically exhibit more evidence for Greek culture than others. Haider (2009) treats Nineveh and Assur.

and a certain Anu-uballit, governor of his home city and a priest, actually earned the name Nikarchos from Antiochus II.⁴² Still, such men did not define themselves or their community as Greek, and the existence of strigils in burial finds does not verify that Urukians engaged in Greek gymnastic practices.⁴³ At most, the community's members, governed by a temple structure and priestly hierarchy, were adopting symbols of Seleucid imperial authority to frame themselves as legitimate local governors and elite Urukians. For this reason, Anu-uballit Nikarchos, as he apparently celebrated in a building inscription, completed a temple to the Urukian deities Anu and Antum (244 BCE) for the health of Antiochus II and Seleucus II. But he did so in Akkadian cuneiform, a language of overt prestige in the Urukian community. Likewise, when Anu-uballit Kephalon renovated this temple (201 BCE), he commemorated the event in the same language. Notables such as Anu-uballit Nikarchos may have penetrated the symbolic universe of the Greeks, but they interwove Greek symbols with Urukian ones and recast them as signs of elite authority for an Urukian audience.⁴⁴

While rebellion was characteristically requited by state violence, the Seleucid dynasty typically intervened in such symbolic worlds only to collect tribute, impose garrisons, or establish connections to local cults and priestly classes that conferred royal legitimation. They for instance participated in the rites of Babylon in ways reflecting continuities with neo-Assyrian, neo-Babylonian, or Persian royal behavior.⁴⁵ After stabilizing their dynastic rule, the Seleucid kings patronized the New Year festival at Babylon and its rituals of social cohesion.⁴⁶ In the Borsippa cylinder, Antiochus I described in Akkadian cuneiform how he restored or refurbished Babylon's temple of Bel-Marduk and Borsippa's temples to Nabu and Nanaya.⁴⁷ In this document, Antiochus referred to himself as

⁴² Hannestad (2012) 996 discusses strigils, but it is unclear whether they belonged to ethnic Greeks or Urukians or were integrated into gymnastic culture. Kuhrt (1996) 50–51; Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993) 150–53; Sherwin-White (1983a) 214–218. Anu-uballit Nikarchos' inscription, which commemorates the establishment of a temple to Anu and Antum, shows that he was the son of Anu-iksur, son of Ah'utu. It is unclear how Anu-uballit Kephalon (who renovated the temple in 201 BCE) acquired his Greek name, but he apparently had married a Greek woman, Antiochis, daughter of Diophantos.

⁴³ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993) 151; Hannestad (2012) 997 provide succinct discussion.

⁴⁴ Likewise, Clancier (2011). Potts (1997) 97–103 describes how inhabitants of Spasinou Charax and Persian Gulf regions later exploited prestige values of Roman luxury items.

⁴⁵ Dirven (1999) 140 describes how hymns of Assyrian kings petitioned Nabu and Nanaya. Kuhrt (1987b) 45; Sherwin-White (1983b) 159 discuss how Nebuchadnezzar II participated in Babylon's New Year's festival to establish bonds with Bel-Marduk, Nabu, and Nanaya; text in *ABC* 5.14, 100.

⁴⁶ Kuhrt (1996) 48. Erickson (2011) 53–57 discusses cuneiform sources for Antiochus I and Babylon.

⁴⁷ Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1991) 75–76; (1993) 36–37 present translated text and transliterated original.

“caretaker of Esagila and Ezida,” a title that the Assyrian king Sargon II used centuries before, and he imitated Nebuchadnezzar II through language, titulature, and textual style.⁴⁸ Because of Antiochus’ respect for Babylon’s cults, Berossus, a priest of Bel-Marduk, wrote the *Babyloniaca* in Greek. His text located the Seleucid dynasty in continuous traditions of Babylonian kingship.⁴⁹

This trend persisted in the century before Antiochus IV’s reign. In 226 BCE Seleucus III commanded the chief administrator of Esagila to make offerings to the Babylonian gods for the dynastic family at the New Year’s festival. Likewise, Antiochus III participated in a festival at Babylon and Borsippa in 188–87, and the priest of Bel-Marduk presented him with money, gold, and a purple garment that had belonged to Nebuchadnezzar II.⁵⁰ Despite Antiochus’ practical domination, such gifts were part of a ritualized performance that recast the lopsided relationship of power between the king and the Babylonian community as one of reciprocity. By giving gifts to Antiochus during the cultic festival, the priests honored him as the city’s benefactor and indicated that he received governing authority and honors because of his subordination to their gods. In such ways, Seleucid kings inserted themselves into the cultural and religious continuities of temple communities.

Only in former Ptolemaic territories, such as Phoenicia, did resident communities earn recognition as Greek *poleis*. Under the Ptolemies, Sidon and Tyre asserted Greek identifications because they had interacted closely with Greeks during the classical period. They had also developed civic institutions like those of Greek *poleis* even by the early stages of Greek settlement in Syria.⁵¹ Still more, the Ptolemies, unlike the Seleucids, often included members of local ethnicities into Greek civic communities or recognized them as legitimate Greeks.⁵² As a result, the citizens of Phoenician cities reoriented their civic ideologies, cultivated gymnasia and other markers of Greek identification, and interwove Greek and Phoenician symbols into their civic cultures, even while perhaps housing distinct communities of ethnic Greeks.⁵³ Yet, not all Phoenicians became citizens of

⁴⁸ Limet (2005) 123. ⁴⁹ Kuhrt (1987a) 55–56. ⁵⁰ Kuhrt (1996) 48–49 translates this text.

⁵¹ Bagnall (1976) 22; Grainger (1991) 65–66. Hdt. 1.56, 1.146, 5.57–59; *SEG* 2.330, 14.826; Bickerman (1939a) 91; Millar (1993a) 265 document ties between Greeks and Phoenicians.

⁵² In Egypt, Egyptian elites increasingly earned the status of “Greek” over time. Burstein (2003) 235–39. During the early third century BCE, judging by the decrees they issued to praise external benefactors, Lycian settlements and *perioikoi* of their countryside were apparently organized into Greek *politeiai* under the Ptolemies. Wörle (1977) 43–44; (1978) 201–2, with commentary.

⁵³ Phoenician participation in Greek games verifies the existence of gymnastic institutions. *IG* 11.203A, line 68. By the 170s, Tyre had established an *Olympeia* dedicated to Heracles/Melqart. 2 Macc.

recognized Greek *politeiai*, especially in the countryside. Such were the Seleucid empire's dominant ethnic divisions. Antiochus IV was the first king to challenge them.

Redefining Hellenism: eastern symbols in Greek *poleis*

Upon succeeding his brother Seleucus IV in 175 BCE, Antiochus IV governed a weakened Seleucid empire. Because the Romans had severely defeated his father Antiochus III, the treaty of Apamea (188 BCE) had stipulated that the Seleucids pay an indemnity and confer hostages upon the Romans. This mandate compelled Antiochus to spend much of his young adulthood at Rome. Perhaps most taxing of all, the Seleucids ceded their territories in Asia Minor. By Antiochus' reign, the Seleucid kings had perhaps paid the indemnity, but the loss of Asia Minor's Greek city-states and manpower, which had filled the Seleucids' phalanxes, dealt a significant blow.⁵⁴ The peaceful reign of Antiochus' brother Seleucus IV, whose son Antiochus displaced when he became king, had introduced revenue but had not resolved his empire's enduring problems. Amid such losses and a questionable dynastic claim, Antiochus IV bolstered his royal legitimacy by declaring himself a manifest god (*theos epiphanēs*). He also tried to demonstrate connections to classical Greece and to consolidate the network of Greek city-states that knit together Seleucid Syria, Phoenicia, and Cilicia. By doing so, he would restore Seleucid prestige and promote solidarity among Greek peer polities, whose "autonomy" he in principle endorsed by allowing them to mint municipal bronzes.⁵⁵

While famously imitating many contemporary Roman customs, Antiochus IV also valued classical Greek traditions, and he treated them as authoritative forms of Greek culture.⁵⁶ He conferred benefactions upon numerous cities and temples in Greece and western Asia Minor, such as

4.18–19. Greek metics at Sidon possessed their own *politeumata* organized by home city, as inscribed painted *stēlai* of Greek mercenaries show. Macridy Bey (1904) 547–56. During the third century BCE, Sidonians established a settlement at Marissa, and numerous tombs, small finds, and inscriptions show that they cultivated Greek language and artistic forms. Peters and Thiersch (1905) 15–75; Oren and Rappaport (1984); Jacobsen (2007).

⁵⁴ Polyb. 21.17 describes the terms of Apamea. Daniel Schwartz (2008) 544–45 treats the indemnity (and conflicting evidence whether it was paid).

⁵⁵ Capdetrey (2007) 212–14.

⁵⁶ Antiochus had lived as a hostage in Rome, and Roman intervention had famously curtailed his second invasion of Egypt in 168 BCE. His massive festival at Daphne therefore featured soldiers in Roman military dress, Roman-style gladiatorial games, and Antiochus' imitation of a Roman tribune. These innovations reflected Antiochus' power and domestication of Roman idioms. Edmondson (1999) 87; Strootman (2007) 308–14; Mittag (2006) 128–39.

the temple of Zeus at Olympia.⁵⁷ His activity bolstered his credentials as a Greek. Ruling over Greek colonies distributed among, and to a certain extent intermarrying with, local populations, Antiochus was vulnerable to reproaches that he ruled a degenerate eastern kingdom. Antiochus III, Antiochus' father, allegedly mustered armies of decadent Syrians and "Syrian and Asiatic Greeks."⁵⁸ If Athenaeus is reliable, the Athenian historian Phylarchus and the philosopher Posidonius, a native of Syrian Apamea educated in Athens and active in the first century BCE, described the Greeks of Syria as having assumed the wanton behaviors of the Near East's residents. Since they rode elephants, wore Indian unguents, feasted immoderately, and used the gymnasium for personal excesses, they were Greeks no longer.⁵⁹ Likewise, in the early first century BCE, Meleager, a Greek from Gadara, anticipated that his Greek audience would dismiss him as a Syrian. In one poem he distinguished himself from local "Assyrians" and considered "Attic Gadara" his fatherland, and he then responded to his critics by asking, "What is the marvel if I am a Syrian? We inhabit a single homeland, the world."⁶⁰

Antiochus IV's patronage of Greek civic life in the Seleucid realm was much more complicated than his benefactions to Greek communities elsewhere. For one, Antiochus ruled diverse ethnic populations, and with some exceptions, he did not bolster the formation of Greek *poleis* east of the Euphrates. In fact, murky accounts of his attempts to engage in rites of sacred marriage suggest that he, like his ancestors, established links with Near Eastern temple communities by patronizing or participating in their religious rites, not by altering civic constitutions.⁶¹ Also, the forms of Greek civic life produced in Syria could never exactly imitate those of classical Greece if Antiochus' Greek and Syrian subjects were to bridge ethno-cultural divides. Yet, after the treaty of Apamea (188) and amid the wars that he waged along the Ptolemaic frontier in 170 and 169–68, Antiochus endeavored to consolidate and patronize the network of Greek

⁵⁷ Antiochus dedicated altars and statues at Delos. *OGIS* 246; 250; 251. He also endowed the temple of Zeus at Olympia with a purple woollen curtain showing Syrian and Phoenician influences. Pausanias, 5.12.4.

⁵⁸ Livy 35.49.8; 36.17.4–5 (or alternatively, Syrians and Asiatic Greeks).

⁵⁹ Ath. 1.32 (18e), 5.46 (210d–f), 6.78 (261b–c), 12.35 (527e–f), 12.56 (540b–c). Athenaeus, however, merits caution. Ceccarelli (2011).

⁶⁰ Meleager claimed to be from "Attic Gadara" located among the "Assyrians." *Anth. Pal.* 7.417. Meleager's claim of being a "citizen of the world" was a conventional Cynic perspective. In *Anth. Pal.* 7.419, Meleager classifies Aramaic-speakers as Syrian and thereby distinguishes them from Greeks, even if they can read Greek.

⁶¹ Granius Licinianus 28.6; 2 Macc. 1:13–16. The marriage of "Diana" recorded by Granius at Hierapolis (or a *hiera polis*) may have constituted a Near Eastern rite of "sacred marriage."

poleis west of the Euphrates.⁶² This would potentially deter resistance along the southern border that the Seleucids' defeat by the Romans and the lure of Ptolemaic patronage could embolden.

Within this context, Antiochus stimulated Greek communities to integrate local symbols into their public articulations of Greek civic performance, thereby enabling them to redefine what Greekness was. He also allowed members of various ethnicities or temple communities to organize official Greek *poleis* by interweaving Greek and local idioms into discursive and performative frameworks that they experienced as "Greek." Such processes potentially promoted solidarity among ethnic Greeks and Syrians and stimulated new frameworks of signification as communities restructured the distinct symbolic worlds of Greek city-states and local ethnicities. Even if they did not share kinship or ethnic bonds (*syngeneia*) with Greek *poleis*, such communities still generated expressions of civic Greekness acceptable to the Greek peer polity network that they had in theory joined.

The spate of municipal coins minted during Antiochus' reign parallels and helps contextualize this general process. These coins alone do not represent the beliefs and practices of minting cities, but it must be stressed that images on coins often copied or paralleled imagery, titles, and messages exhibited by other media, such as inscriptions, architecture, or cult statues. In accretion, they reflected and shaped existing attitudes.⁶³ It is therefore possible to postulate that accretions of coins, including unique issues deviating from standard civic symbols, affected social and cultural experience. Between 169 and 164 BCE, Antiochus either allowed or prompted at least eighteen cities in Syria, Phoenicia, Cilicia, and Mesopotamia to mint municipal bronzes. These coin types typically bore his likeness, that of the king's patron deity Zeus, or those of local gods. Some of these coins also possessed Phoenician legends.⁶⁴ The most conventional coins, such as those of Antioch at Daphne, Nisibis, and Edessa, presented profiles of Antiochus on the obverse and likenesses of Zeus on the reverse.⁶⁵ Minting cities' coins often sported dynastic epithets, such as "the Antiochenes," whether or not citizens normally called themselves such. Yet, while obverses occasionally departed from rendering profiles of Antiochus, reverses bore the greatest diversity in image and legend.

⁶² Wright (2005) examines this problem and its contributions to "syncretistic" practices among Seleucid kings.

⁶³ Noreña (2011) 261–65.

⁶⁴ Babelon (1890) 98–113; Mørkholm (1965) 63–67, (1984) 97–102. Meadows (2001) 61 theorizes that the coinage reflects Antiochus' effort to increase royal interference in Greek civic affairs.

⁶⁵ SC 2.1416–20, 1499–1504. Example image accessible through Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., at www.cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=62303 (12/6/2011).

The mixture of Greek and local divinities or Greek and Phoenician legends that such coins bore was generated in part by organic cultural interaction and generations of intermarriage among ethnic Greeks and surrounding populations. Such interactions and marriages perpetuated Greek civic bodies. Still, by endorsing such coins, Antiochus prompted numerous Greek cities to express links to him as their royal patron and articulate their local qualities on official media.⁶⁶ The spate of civic coins minted during Antiochus' reign, much like "traveling" decrees and other forms of network interaction, thereby helped embed city-states within the peer polity network of Syria and Phoenicia and enabled them to express self-governance in a context of royal hegemony. These coins, unlike traveling decrees, were perhaps only handled in the localities where they circulated, but inasmuch as various cities imitated one another's issues, mimicked royal ones, or consciously competed to claim the status of metropolis, the coins still document the consolidation of a peer polity network in Seleucid Syria, Phoenicia, and Cilicia. In this sense, the very production of these coins explicitly expressed a city's collective Greek *politeia* and its embedding in the Seleucid imperial framework. Also, like the production of honorific inscriptions and statues for kings, the minting of these municipal coins was part of a complex discourse in which the king and his cities negotiated their relationship. These negotiations enabled civic communities to recast their lopsided relationship of power with their monarch as reciprocal forms of interaction between autonomous city-states and their patron. Accordingly, despite all their diversity and varying engagement with Greek or Near Eastern cultural symbols, such coins represented civic bodies that interwove diverse cultural symbols.⁶⁷ They thereby expressed localizing forms of civic Greekness.

Since this production of civic coinage was new in the Seleucid empire, it was likely a product of Antiochus' reign that stimulated cities to weave royal and civic symbols, with their varied cultural fabric, into narratives of autonomy, royal patronage, and Greek community. Cities within Cilicia, for instance, often minted some coins possessing images of the king, dynastic deities, and dynastic legends while also producing other coins that bore local legends and local divinities.⁶⁸ Accordingly, at Mopsus in Cilicia, civic authorities produced certain coins with legends celebrating the "Seleucians on the Pyramus" and others representing the "Mopsestians." Likewise, the

⁶⁶ Wright (2005) 72, 77–82 locates these municipal issues in a broader tendency to feature "syncretized" divinities on municipal and royal coins during and after Antiochus' reign. Such representations and kings' association with local divinities had certain unifying potential.

⁶⁷ Mørkholm (1966) 130; Zahle (1990) 130. ⁶⁸ Meyer (2001) 511.

city of Hierapolis-Castabala minted some coins showing Antiochus and an eagle. It produced others depicting the personification of the city's fortune (*Tychē*) and the local deity Perasia.⁶⁹ Equally as often, the same coin type combined Greek and Near Eastern symbols in its images and legends. For instance, some polities depicted their patron deities in the same manner that other cities' coins rendered Olympian divinities but included symbols that indexed the divinities' un-classical origins or innovative "hybrid" nature. At Hierapolis-Manbog in Syria, minters presented Zeus with classicizing iconography but retained a bull or lion at his flanks.⁷⁰ Evidence from Parthian-era Dura-Europos, along with Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess*, shows that these animals were typical consorts of Zeus-Hadad and Hera-Atargatis during the Hellenistic and Roman imperial periods.⁷¹ In other cases, the likenesses of gods on coins possessed traits reflecting the pre-Hellenistic Near East, but their legends included a dynastic epithet linking the city to its king. For instance, Tarsus in Cilicia apparently minted coin reverses showing the local deity Sandon standing on an animal's back. The image resembles those of Neo-Hittite reliefs representing a deity on a bull or lion. Yet, the city inscribed the coin's legend with the dynastic epithet "the Antiochenes on the Cydnus."⁷²

Cities of Phoenicia, in which Greek citizens were often descended from Phoenicians, minted issues with Phoenician legends or motifs. Some types represented myths of Greek origin with images while possessing legends in Phoenician. A coin type of Sidon depicted the mythical maiden Europa, whose origins were often ascribed to Sidon, on a bull, but it contained a Phoenician legend. This coin, like the Sidonian inscription honoring Diotimos (c. 200), references how the Sidonians claimed kinship bonds to Thebes through the line of Agenor and Cadmus and how they were sending athletes to Panhellenic games on the Greek mainland.⁷³ Other Phoenician types, like those of Tyre, showed a symbol of civic prosperity and combined it with a Phoenician legend that documented the city's local history and asserted it to be "mother" or "metropolis" of other Phoenician cities. The Sidonians, not to be outdone by their Tyrian rivals, produced another coin type with a rudder. This issue used a Phoenician legend to profess

⁶⁹ Meyer (2001) 517, nos. 9–10; SC 2.1385–88, 1391. SC does not treat the coins with Perasia as issues of Antiochus' reign.

⁷⁰ SC 2.1432–33. ⁷¹ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 31.

⁷² *BMC Lycaonia*, 177–78, Pl. 32–33 (for Sandon on horse); Meyer (2001) 517, Fig. 2 for both images. Meyer classifies the coin as a municipal bronze. Pohl (2004) 92 emphasizes the coin's neo-Hittite iconography. SC does not treat these as issues of Antiochus' reign. Example image accessible through Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. at www.cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=39972 (12/6/2011).

⁷³ SC 2.1455–56. Inscription in Bickerman (1939a); Moretti (1953) no. 41.

Sidon to be the metropolis of a host of Phoenician cities, including Tyre.⁷⁴ Moreover, sometimes coins from cities of Phoenicia had divine images and legends that either featured continuities from pre-Hellenistic periods or produced un-classical “hybrids.” A coin of Byblus showed a six-winged El-Cronus, which resembled Assyrian depictions of winged gods, and displayed the city’s traditional name *Gebal* in Phoenician.⁷⁵ Finally, coin legends sometimes interwove local traditions and dynastic symbols. While bronzes from Berytus possessed classicizing images of Poseidon or Baal, they presented the city’s Greek dynastic epithet *Laodicea* in Phoenician transliteration but professed the city to be the metropolis of Canaan, not Phoenicia.⁷⁶

These Phoenician legends or pre-Hellenistic iconographies were not antagonistic to, or divorced from, civic Greekness. By juxtaposing diverse cultural symbols within what citizens experienced as the institutional and conceptual framework of Greek *poleis*, whose civic structures often contained many local properties, the cities of Phoenicia, for instance, re-affirmed their rank and status as Greek cities while expressing connections to other cities of Phoenicia. While some might analyze such phenomenon in terms of hybridity, creolization, and the like, one should note that in context these cities’ coins expressed innovative forms of Greekness and membership in the Greek peer polity network of Syria and Phoenicia. Such forms of Greekness would have been intelligible to other Greek communities while still emphasizing their cities’ uniquely local qualities.

Because of their novelty, these coins facilitated narratives of both Seleucid royal patronage and civic autonomy in ways entirely new for Seleucid coinage. Antiochus had permitted or even stimulated such cities to reaffirm their links with the royal household, and these cities responded by identifying themselves with dynastic epithets and by featuring images of Antiochus and representations of Zeus derived from those on royal issues.⁷⁷ They had also integrated Greek and local symbols into their images and legends to create innovative expressions of civic Greekness. Greek culture,

⁷⁴ SC 2.1454, 1461–69. The Sidonians’ legend: “of the Sidonians, the mother of Cambe, of Hippo, of Citium, and of Tyre.”

⁷⁵ SC 2.1443–44. The legend: “of the holy Gebal.” Example image accessible through Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., at www.cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=133847 (12/6/2011).

⁷⁶ SC 2.1448–49. The legend: “of Laodicea, the mother of Canaan.” Also, SC 2.1450. Example image accessible through Classical Numismatic Group, Inc., at www.cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=69662 (12/6/2011).

⁷⁷ Tcherikower (1927) 38–45, 51–95; Mørkholm (1966) 116–17. While Antiochus perhaps established Greek civic constitutions at many minting cities, these could be the work of predecessors.

as expressed through Near Eastern idioms, could bind the Seleucid empire's diverse communities to their king and each other, while still facilitating the articulation of local customs.

The minting of such coins in various cities had implications for how communities could maneuver within the socio-political context of the Seleucid empire. Some local idioms had penetrated Greek communities in the past two centuries. Despite efforts to uphold clear boundaries between Greeks and their surrounding populations, the "Greek" civic bodies of many cities were heterogeneous. Organic cultural interaction and marriages between Greek men and the women of local resident ethnicities, although perhaps infrequent, had introduced Near Eastern cultural forms to Greek civic bodies. Also, the Greek civic communities of Phoenicia consisted mostly of ethnic Phoenicians, who had integrated Phoenician traditions into their expressions of civic Greekness. Still, it must be emphasized that Greek citizens, whatever their genealogical origins, distinguished themselves from Syrians. The autonomous coins alone could not create bonds between Greek citizens and local Syrians who did not have citizenship, and a stark distinction between colonizer and colonized persisted in urban and rural spaces. Being innovative expressions of Greek community, these coins also reinforced divisions between Greek insiders and outsiders.

The municipal coinages minted between 169 and 164 BCE are nonetheless significant because Antiochus IV, unlike his predecessors, also conferred the rank of Greek *polis* upon various ethnic communities of Near Eastern lands.⁷⁸ Although many of Antiochus' alleged civic foundations are dubious, he perhaps oversaw some newly founded Greek communities in Cilicia and Syria that exhibit no evidence for prior Greek settlement. If Antiochus did patronize them as *poleis*, they likely consisted of ethnic Cilicians or Syrians who maintained much continuity in local culture and social organization.⁷⁹ Yet, even if these civic foundations are obscure, Antiochus' favorable treatment of the petition of certain Jews of Jerusalem, who wanted to be organized into a *politeuma* or *polis* of Antiochenes and to establish a gymnasium, shows that he was granting Greek civic rank to members of diverse ethnicities. Just as he had stimulated his cities to create innovative expressions of Greekness on their coins, Antiochus

⁷⁸ Burstein (2003) 239 notes that this process only begins after the treaty of Apamea in 188 BCE.

⁷⁹ Cohen (1978) 16. Cohen (2006) 106, 169, 248–49, 282–83, 286 discusses Antiochus' possible foundations of Epiphania at Hamath in Syria, an Epiphania on the Euphrates in Commagene, and an Antioch at Gerasa. Antiochus or his predecessor Seleucus IV perhaps founded cities called Seleucia at Gaza and Gadara. Schmid (2008) 357 cites potential *polis* organizations and their local cultures in Jordan.

extended Greek citizenship to alternative ethnicities in ways that could elide embedded differences and facilitate localizing expressions of Greek performance. He thereby prompted temple communities and diverse ethnicities in Syria, if not Mesopotamia, to generate innovative “Greek” symbolic frameworks and infuse them with Greek and local symbols.

By such means, Antiochus helped stimulate a field of opportunity that perhaps did not exist previously. By generating innovative frameworks of Greek civic performance, elite members of resident ethnic groups or temple communities could acquire recognition as citizens of Greek collectives. In Jerusalem, Jews of the priestly class “registered” as “Antiochenes among the Jerusalemites,” trained in the gymnasium, and attended the Greek games of cities in the polity network of Syria and Phoenicia.⁸⁰ These “Antiochenes” did so while still being the priests of the city’s temple, the center of Jewish cult, and they did not establish a *boulē* or traditional Greek offices. Yet, by developing a gymnasium and an *ephēbeion*, they created a field of signification in which Greek and Jewish symbols could generate innovative expressions of Greek and Jewish community. The categories of “Greek” and “Jewish” could thereby intersect as civic, not strictly ethnic, concepts.

The establishment of a Greek *politeia* in Jerusalem is the best-documented instance of an otherwise obscure trend of Antiochus’ reign: the incorporation of local ethnicities into Greek civic communities. As such, the following section examines this innovation. It had the potential to stabilize Antiochus’ realm amid the Seleucid empire’s loss of Greek manpower from Asia Minor, instability along the Ptolemaic frontier, and ethnic resistance to a putatively weakened Seleucid administration. It was to do so by expanding and consolidating Syria’s network of Greek city-states and by bringing certain Near Eastern ethnics into solidarity with this network. Yet, such positive effects were negated by significant political factors. Amid such activity, Antiochus was also increasing royal intervention in the affairs of Greek polities and Near Eastern temple communities. Locals could classify such intervention as oppressive and in certain contexts sacrilegious. At Jerusalem, Antiochus’ efforts to manipulate the temple’s priestly hierarchy and to collect tribute negated any positive effects of establishing a community of “Antiochenes.”

⁸⁰ 2 Macc. 4:9–16. In 2 Macc. 4:19–20, the Jews send an embassy to the games of Heracles at Tyre. “Jews” in this work describes members of a perceived ethnic, cultural, or civic group of *Ioudaioi*. Because these were not necessarily adherents of the coherent religious system(s) of Judaism(s), which emerged in the late Roman empire, some scholars argue that *Ioudaios* should be translated as “Judean” and not “Jew.” Mason (2007), but see Daniel Schwartz (2007); Esler (2009).

Greekness, Jerusalem, and failure

Because it dovetailed with his administration's increased intervention in local civic affairs, Antiochus' promotion of new contexts of Greek civic performance failed. While trying to expand and strengthen peer polity networking, Antiochus also endeavored to enhance royal oversight of Near Eastern temple communities and Greek polities. His activity cohered with that of his predecessor Seleucus IV, whom the Tel Maresha dossier and 2 Maccabees indicate as appointing officials for this purpose in Coele Syria and Phoenicia.⁸¹ At Jerusalem, Antiochus' intervention in the temple's priestly hierarchy and finances stimulated factional competition and dissension. In fact, Antiochus' brutal suppression of dissent, as described at the chapter's beginning, incited many Jews to accuse Antiochus of forcing his subjects to "become one people."⁸² The situation at Jerusalem therefore facilitates hypotheses for how Antiochus' increased intervention in Greek *poleis* and Near Eastern temple communities alienated his subjects and undercut any positive effects of his integration of Near Eastern ethnics into Greek communities.

During the late 170s, Antiochus patronized a Greek civic community at Jerusalem. This community consisted of ethnic Jews who desired recognition as the citizens of a Greek city, and this creation of a Greek civic constitution departed from previous Seleucid imperial processes. Previously, Seleucid hegemony had enacted a substantial impact on Judea, and many Jewish notables had adopted various Greek idioms to enact elite status. The third-century wars that the Seleucids and Ptolemies waged for Judea had borne the constant threat of military intervention and violence. The Seleucids' eventual hegemony introduced socio-economic pressures to Judea and further empowered the Zadokite priestly family to govern in the name of Mosaic tradition, or its interpretation thereof. Such phenomena also stimulated forms of discursive resistance represented by the apocalyptic Enochic *Book of Watchers* (1 En. 1–36), which framed for its readers social and epistemological categories alternative to those structured by Hellenistic empires and challenged the authority that a priestly segment sustained by Seleucid royal patronage wielded over Mosaic tradition.⁸³ But

⁸¹ Gera (2009); Cotton and Wörrle (2007) present the inscribed letters that Seleucus exchanged with his governor Heliodoros concerning the appointment of a certain Olympiodoros to administer the sanctuaries of Coele Syria and Phoenicia, perhaps as regional archpriest. 2 Macc. 3:7–40 claims that this same Heliodoros tried to plunder the treasury of the Jewish temple of Jerusalem, but 2 Macc. likely replaces Olympiodoros with Heliodoros. Gera (2009) 146–50. Doran (2012) 78–91 provides recent commentary and bibliography on this episode.

⁸² 1 Macc. 1:41–42.

⁸³ Portier-Young (2011) 49–77, 280–310 (esp. 281).

despite implementing imperial pressures and stimulating local competition for authority in such ways, Antiochus III favored the Jews of Jerusalem; he recognized the integrity of the Jewish ethnicity (*ethnos*) and granted tax remissions.⁸⁴ Late in his reign, Seleucus IV appointed administrators and priestly functionaries for the temples of Coele Syria and Phoenicia so that they could extract revenue, a trend which Antiochus himself perpetuated, but he otherwise did not alter the governing structures of these temples.⁸⁵ Similarly, the *Text of Ben Sira*, written about 180 BCE, outlined how Jews could harmonize Greek conventions of reciprocity with the collective solidarities of their religious community, but it contained no overtly Greek traits or references to Greek colonialism.⁸⁶

Accordingly, while Seleucid hegemony had previously stimulated local transformations, stresses, and tensions, Antiochus' creation of a Greek constitution (*politeia*) of ethnic Jews was new. Jason, from the Zadokite priestly family, had sought it while promising more tribute, and Antiochus had appointed him high priest of the Jewish temple in place of his elder brother Onias. The introduction of a "Greek" community to Jerusalem, which accompanied Antiochus' interference in priestly succession and efforts to extract revenue, perhaps incited competition among notables to control the high priesthood. It marked differences of status between "mass and elite" and likely stimulated some cultural tension. But such competition and cultural tension did not incite overt religious or political conflict, violence, or resistance at the time, despite the hostility that 1 and 2 Maccabees later harbored for the "Greek" community.

While chief priest, Jason founded the two essential institutions of the Seleucid Greek city: a gymnasium and the class of youths that it educated. He enrolled Jews from priestly families into the gymnasium as "Antiochenes."⁸⁷ These "Antiochenes among the Jerusalemites" became Greek citizens of their own *politeia* located within a Judean city despite not being ethnic descendants of Greek or Macedonian colonists. Accordingly, the texts of 1 and 2 Maccabees claimed that these Antiochenes had founded a gymnasium "according to the customs (*nomima*) of the *ethnē*." In the first century CE, Josephus likewise noted that the Jews wanted to abandon

⁸⁴ Aperghis (2004) 166–68 emphasizes that only elites of Jerusalem benefited from Antiochus' remissions. Portier-Young (2011) 49–77, 122–23 discusses the Seleucids' initial stabilization of Mosaic tradition and its local authorities, and suggests that the Acra held a Seleucid garrison.

⁸⁵ Gera (2009) and Cotton and Wörrle (2007). ⁸⁶ Seth Schwartz (2010) 45–79 (esp. 74–76).

⁸⁷ 2 Macc. 4:9, 12–14. The gymnasium's construction indicated *polis* status, even if "the full panoply of Greek political institutions" was not established and traditional organs of governance retained, as Gruen (1993) 243 asserts. Likewise, Sartre (2009) 242–47. 2 Macc. 4:10 therefore describes "the Greek stamp" to which Jason's countrymen gravitated.

their ancestral laws (*patrioi nomoi*) and their own *politeia* in order to adopt a Greek (*hellēnikē*) *politeia*.⁸⁸ It is therefore significant that the inscription from Tyriaion previously described, being nearly contemporary to Jason's high priesthood, shows that communities acquiring *polis* rank were granted a *politeia*, organized into a citizen body (*politeuma*), and endowed with a gymnasium and an *ephēbeion*. Although being an Attalid decree, it demonstrates that the terminology used by the Maccabean authors and Josephus reflects how Antiochene Jews had joined a recognized Greek civic body.⁸⁹

Despite their Greek citizen status, many of these "Antiochenes" were priests of the temple community of Jerusalem, and they interpreted the laws of the Torah in ways that facilitated their participation in both traditional priestly rituals and Greek civic activities.⁹⁰ Accordingly, such Jews trained in the nude and anointed themselves with oil in ways that cohered with Greek gymnastic culture elsewhere. Macedonian sunhats became fashionable among them. 1 Maccabees even controversially states that Antiochene Jews reversed their circumcisions, but since no other sources (including 2 Maccabees) mention it, it is unlikely.⁹¹ Antiochenes certainly frequented Greek games staged within the peer polity network of Syria and Phoenicia, and an embassy, even if refraining from cult dedications, attended the games at Tyre for Melqart-Heracles at which Antiochus was present.⁹²

Such transformations likely provoked some cultural tension and dissent. The Antiochenes' innovations, being linked with Antiochus' interference in priestly succession and fiscal extraction, were part of a moral system that was alternative to what many Jews deemed "a cosmic order established by Israel's God" or their "ancestral customs."⁹³ Rival clans of Jerusalem's priestly class certainly could have exploited this in their political strategies. Yet, minus the dubious reference to reversed circumcision, such innovations did not necessarily violate the cultic precepts of all Jews or priests,

⁸⁸ 1 Macc. 1:15; 2 Macc. 4:11–12 emphasizes that the Antiochenes "dissolved their customary *politeiai* and innovated with transgressive customs." Daniel Schwartz (2008) 207–24, 529–32; Doran (2012) 98–111 comment on this episode. Josephus, *AJ* 12.240–41: ancestral laws and *politeia*.

⁸⁹ Eumenes granted Tyriaion a *politeia* and a gymnasium where oil was given to youths (lines 8–9, 33–34), and he arranged the citizens into a single *politeuma* (line 27) governed by its own laws. Jonnes and Riel (1997) 3–5; Jonnes (2002) 1.86–89, no. 393; the inscription. Kennell (2005); Daniel Schwartz (2008) 530–32; Sartre (2009) 228 compare with Jerusalem.

⁹⁰ Grabbe (2002).

⁹¹ 2 Macc. 4:11–17; 1 Macc. 1:15; Gauthier and Hatzopoulos (1993) discuss typical gymnastic practice. Portier-Young (2011) 96–102 supports that reversed circumcision occurred, but Gruen (1998) 29–30; Daniel Schwartz (2008) 211–12 challenge 1 Maccabees's precision and reliability.

⁹² 2 Macc. 4:18–20. Grainger (1991) 118.

⁹³ Portier-Young (2011) 91–114 (97 quoted) provides details.

who likely varied in their rhetoric or interpretation of sacred laws or texts. Antiochenes could in principle engage in Greek gymnastic culture and maintain Jewish traditions and priestly duties. Moreover, even if he displaced his older brother through Seleucid interference, Jason's Zadokite genealogy and preservation of the temple's treasures from Seleucid fiscal extraction distinguished him from successors whose priestly tenures were more volatile. Some Jews apparently defined the Antiochenes as the aristocratic Greek element of their temple community, and their presence at Jerusalem directly incited no mass violence based on religious or cultural premises.

The Greek civic status of this ethnic Jewish community relied on the ability of local elites to interweave Greek and Jewish traditions to fashion a new framework of discourse and performance. While the new Antiochenes developed a gymnasium and an *ephēbeion*, their authoritatively Jewish structures continued to consist of priests and a council of elders (*gerousia*). The Antiochenes' status as Greeks depended on their participation in the gymnasium, and a Greek ethnic genealogy was not essential even if certain Jews were now claiming kinship with Spartans through Abraham.⁹⁴ In fact, if Josephus reports correctly that Jason and his successor Menelaus had used new Greek names instead of their original Jewish ones, he demonstrates how the Antiochenes of Jerusalem were distinguishing themselves from previous residents of the Near East who had merely adopted certain Seleucid dynastic names as idioms of authority, not Greekness. Unlike dynastic names such as Alexander or Seleucus, the names Jason and Menelaus referenced classical mythological traditions or posited connections to mythical figures of the Peloponnese (or Thessaly) with whom some Jews now claimed common descent through Abraham. Accordingly, Antiochene Jews had simultaneously developed gymnastic institutions, posited kinship bonds with Spartans, and adopted names with ties to Sparta or Thessaly to express Greek civic identifications. As Greek citizens (*politai*), they had adopted certain Greek customs and had interwoven them with select local traditions, thereby creating a symbolic field within which expressions of Greekness and Jewishness could intersect.⁹⁵ Yet, in the Seleucid imperial system, putative transmission of citizenship and ethnic ancestry from Greco-Macedonian settlers, not remote mythical

⁹⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 12.239 records the name change. Jason, after failing to reclaim the priesthood and Jerusalem, fled to Sparta because of his alleged kinship with the Spartans. 2 Macc. 5:9–10. 1 Macc. 12:19–23 references a letter written by a Spartan king Arius to a high priest named Onias, but its authenticity is dubious. Bartlett (1998) 95–96.

⁹⁵ Seth Schwartz (1998) 40–41 on Jerusalem under Antiochus IV.

bonds of kinship, had previously earned communities recognition as Greek. Antiochus' recognition of a Greek *politeia* of Antiochenes because of their civic or cultural attributes thereby distinguishes him from predecessors.

Despite tensions that it likely inspired, the creation of a community of Antiochene Jews did not trigger violence or rebellion, but Antiochus' efforts to extract revenue continued to incite elite competition for the high priesthood and alienated certain subjects. By offering the largest gift to Antiochus, Menelaus, from a rival priestly family, replaced Jason as high priest.⁹⁶ He and his brother Lysimachus eventually used golden vessels from the Jewish sanctuary to pay their promised tribute and employed violence to suppress dissent. An embassy sent to the king to accuse Menelaus was executed.⁹⁷ While Jason's Zadokite lineage and respect for the temple's sacred vessels had initially enabled him to create a Greek community at Jerusalem with little overt resistance, Menelaus' alternate lineage and his exploitation of the temple's treasures prompted many Jews to regard his activity as sacrilegious. Antiochus' increased intervention in priestly succession and tribute extraction thereby stimulated an unstable factionalism in Jerusalem.⁹⁸

This factionalism soon intersected with rebellion. During Antiochus' second invasion of Egypt in 168 BCE, Jason tried to regain his priesthood through an armed uprising upon hearing rumors of Antiochus' death. His supporters took control of Jerusalem and slaughtered many of Menelaus' followers.⁹⁹ Antiochus treated the incident as a revolt meriting the state terror that Seleucid authorities typically inflicted on rebellious subjects. Upon his return, he engaged in a general massacre and pillaged the temple with the aid of Menelaus' supporters.¹⁰⁰ After moving north, he then sent an officer named Apollonius, the commander of the Mysians, to

⁹⁶ 2 Macc. 4:23–25; Hyldahl (1990) 191; Aperghis (2004) 168–69.

⁹⁷ 2 Macc. 4:30–50. It is debated whether such use of the temple's treasures was transgressive, but critics could cast it as such. Mendels (2009) 48–49.

⁹⁸ Nongbri (2005) describes how political factionalism triggered the Maccabean revolt.

⁹⁹ Portier-Young (2011) 126–30 treats the factional strife in detail. 2 Macc. 5:1–23. Josephus, *AJ* 12.239–40 claims that the Tobiad family supported Menelaus but that most Jews sympathized with Jason's faction.

¹⁰⁰ Antiochus likely only plundered the temple once, not twice. 2 Macc. 5:1–24 only mentions an act of pillaging after the second Egyptian campaign of 168. Daniel 11:25–30, while ambiguous, certainly references pillaging after the second invasion. 1 Macc. 1:21–28 places Antiochus' act of plundering after the first invasion. Gruen (1993) 246–47; Grabbe (2002) 16; Mittag (2006) 23–26, 257 (who compiles all sources) discuss Antiochus' pillaging of the Jewish temple but differ over whether it happened once (in 170 or 168) or twice (in 170 and 168). Similarly, Mittag (2006) 250–51, n. 97 argues for only one plundering, but he places it after the first invasion of Egypt. Daniel Schwartz (2008) 533–36 and Doran (2012) 139–42, who place it after the second invasion, provide the most likely scenario.

enact additional reprisals and to fortify the citadel of Acra.¹⁰¹ Antiochus' controversial edict suppressing or reforming the Jewish cult the following year was likely a drastic extension of his immediately previous efforts to maintain a distinctly Seleucid cosmos among Jews through violence and terror.¹⁰²

As the rivalry of Jason and Menelaus indicates, Antiochus' efforts to incorporate the temple structure of Jerusalem into a network of Greek city-states coincided with his increased intervention in the temple's priestly affairs. Of the two processes, the intervention was much more volatile. Antiochus' plundering, anomalous cult reforms, dedication of the Jewish temple to Zeus Olympius (or Baal-shamin), and similarly repressive measures, which scholars have analyzed and debated, are beyond this narrative's scope.¹⁰³ What must be stressed, however, is that Antiochus' manipulation of the priestly hierarchy and the temple's finances had by 168 stimulated civil strife between Jason and Menelaus and undercut any stabilizing effects of making Jewish elites into Greek citizens. When he, with Menelaus' support, subsequently endeavored to consolidate power in Judea and along the Ptolemaic frontier by plundering the temple and by suppressing or reforming Jewish cult practice, his activity prompted the Maccabean revolt. It also perhaps stimulated a spate of apocalyptic Jewish writings, including the *Book of Daniel*, the Enochic *Apocalypse of Weeks*, and the Enochic *Book of Dreams*, that resisted imperial categories by goading readers to peer beyond Seleucid organization of the material world to recognize "God's providential ordering of space."¹⁰⁴ As the revolt gained momentum over the subsequent decades, the Seleucids endured the loss of Judean territory. At this stage, many Jews pitted themselves against Greek cultural forms that they now associated with an oppressive ruling power.¹⁰⁵ The previous creation of "Antiochenes" at Jerusalem had simply made the Jews' traditional

¹⁰¹ 2 Macc. 5:24; 1 Macc. 1:29–40. Josephus, *AJ* 12.248–52 erroneously claims that Antiochus was present.

¹⁰² Portier-Young (2011) 176–215.

¹⁰³ Chiefly documented by 1 Macc. 1:41–64; 2 Macc. 6.1–11; Dan. 11:31–32; Josephus, *AJ* 12.253–56. Daniel Schwartz (2008) 273 treats sources. The cult reform, the dedication of the Jewish temple to Zeus Olympius (Baal-shamin), and Antiochus' motivations have recently been examined, for example, by Collins (1993) 357–58; Gruen (1993) 250–64; Scurlock (2000); Eliav (2008) 616–21; Daniel Schwartz (2008) 270–95, 541–43; Portier-Young (2011) 176–215; Aperghis (2011) 73–81; Doran (2011 and (2012) 125–42. Mittag (2006) 256–68 argues that Menelaus instigated the cult reforms of Antiochus' reign. Antiochus may have established a royal mint on the Acra. Barag (2000–2002) 60, Pl. 11–12.

¹⁰⁴ Portier-Young (2011) analyzes the birth of apocalyptic literature as a response to Antiochus' attempt to "re-create" Judea through state-sponsored brutality (117 and 382 quoted).

¹⁰⁵ Portier-Young (2011) 112–15 observes that Jewish sources' disdain for Greek culture reflects its association with imperial oppression, not an enduring hostility to all Greek cultural idioms.

priestly elites into Greek citizens. Despite its link to Antiochus' increased fiscal extraction and interference in priestly succession, this process should be distinguished from Antiochus' later acts of oppression that stimulated the Maccabean insurgency. It was Antiochus' brutality against the Jews and their sacred landscape in 168–167, not the formation of a community of Antiochenes in context, that foremost stimulated the contempt that Jews subsequently aired toward Greek cultural practices, especially in 1 and 2 Maccabees.¹⁰⁶ Still, many subsequent Jews, including Hasmoneans, adopted Greek idioms.

The tensions and instability arising at Jerusalem were not isolated. Antiochus' intervention in the affairs of temple communities and his extraction of revenue from them, a trend that Seleucus IV had already initiated in south Syria and Phoenicia, likely alienated communities elsewhere that could adopt other patrons. In fact, it would be no surprise if the tendency of Antiochus' subjects to call him *epīmanēs* (mad), not *epīphanēs*, was further encouraged by his reputation for plundering temples, among other eccentricities.¹⁰⁷ Likewise, rebellions staged by Tarsus and Mallus likely constituted the reactions of Greek city-states to increased encroachment, and the emergence of *agoranomoi* (overseers of the market) in Phoenician cities may reflect royal intervention.¹⁰⁸ According to 1 Maccabees, Antiochus led an expedition east to “seize tribute from the provinces and gather money,” and his efforts to exact tribute from the temple of Bel-Marduk in Babylon, where he may have founded a *politeia* of Greek settlers, could have contributed to outbreaks of ethnic violence.¹⁰⁹ Finally, his religious reforms and fiscal extractions in Judea and perhaps in Samaria, where a decree of Antiochus preserved in Josephus celebrates how the Sidonians of Shechem adopted “Greek customs” and worshipped a manifestation of Zeus, engendered factionalism, instability, and the Maccabean rebellion along the Ptolemaic frontier.¹¹⁰ Instead of consolidating a network

¹⁰⁶ Even then, these texts targeted idolatry more than Hellenism. Mendels (2009).

¹⁰⁷ Polyb. 26.1; 30.26.9.

¹⁰⁸ 2 Macc. 4:30 states that Antiochus conferred these cities upon his mistress. Finkielsztejn (2005) 247–48, 261; Capdetrey (2007) 221 discuss Phoenicia.

¹⁰⁹ 1 Macc. 3:31–32; Mittag (2006) 198–201. Del Monte (1997) 78–79; Capdetrey (2007) 326 discuss the royal appointment of a *zazukku* attested by a Babylonian cuneiform document (169 BCE). Van der Spek (2009) 108 analyzes violence at Babylon. A cuneiform document (163 BCE) indicates that a king named Antiochus had introduced Greeks to Babylon and that a recent outbreak of violence had occurred. Whether *OGIS* 253=*IGSK* 65.103 documents a foundation of Greeks at Babylon by Antiochus IV is debatable.

¹¹⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 12.257–64. Opinions on the politics of the Samaritans and the identities of the Sidonians vary. For instance, Seth Schwartz (1993) 15–16; Isaac (1991) 133, 142–43; Pummer (2009) 161–78; in detail, Dušek (2012) 65–118, who suggests that Antiochus extracted increased revenues from the sanctuary at Gerizim.

of Greek city-states in his empire, his increased intervention contributed to the rise of local dynasts that characterized the century after his death. It is therefore emblematic of his reign that Antiochus allegedly died after trying to plunder a temple in Elymais and being repelled by its priests and their followers.¹¹¹ After Antiochus' death, local dynasts of various ethnicity acted as religious personnel or protectors of temple structures from royal violence, and they asserted local authority at the expense of Greek magistrates, and, in certain cases, of "imperialist" Greek idioms.

Antiochus' death and Seleucid decline

Numerous factors ushered in the era of Seleucid instability that arose between the death of Antiochus IV and Pompey's intervention in the Near East in 63 BCE. Dynastic civil wars, intensified conflicts with the Ptolemies, the Maccabean-Hasmonean insurgency, and the rise of Parthia as a regional power were among them. The inability of the Seleucids to integrate Syrians and other ethnicities into the network of Greek city-states that stabilized the Seleucid realm was also important. Embedded ethnic differences empowered local authority figures as the Seleucid administration faltered.

Indeed, two concurrent processes characterized the century of Seleucid decline that Antiochus' death initiated: the rise of local dynasts in Seleucid territory and their complex engagement with the Romans and the Parthians, who eventually integrated Seleucid lands into their imperial systems. Continuing divisions between ethnic Greeks and local populations contributed to such collapse and partitioning. Frequent dynastic civil wars, conflicts with the Ptolemies, rebellions, and an inability to raise revenue to meet fiscal burdens were significant factors. So were the dynastic squabbling and wars with the Ptolemies that Antiochus precipitated by succeeding his brother Seleucus IV, whose son he had murdered, and by engaging in full-scale invasions of Egypt.¹¹² Still, the rise of local authority figures, dynastic bloodletting, and failures to generate revenue were interrelated and reciprocating forces.¹¹³ By distinguishing themselves from the ethnicities that they economically exploited, the Greeks empowered

¹¹¹ See the festal letter preserved in 2 Macc. 1:10–36, with Potts (1999) 383. This letter was probably inserted in 2 Maccabees when it was compiled, perhaps c. 140 BCE. Daniel Schwartz (2008) 519–29; Doran (2012) 1–3, 14–17 discuss letters, composition, and dating. Strabo, 16.1.18; 1 Macc. 6; Josephus, *AJ* 12.354–61; Polyb. 31.9; Mittag (2006) 308 present varying accounts of Antiochus' death.

¹¹² Grainger (2010) 284–308, 324.

¹¹³ Ehling (2008); Grainger (2010) 309–402; articles of Erickson and Ramsey (2011) analyze the fragmentation of the Seleucid empire.

dynasts, often communicating in Near Eastern languages and idioms, to form meaningful bonds with local communities, cults, and priests. This trend gained momentum as Greek royal claimants enlisted local dynasts as allies, including the Hasmoneans, in their dynastic wars and became incapable of collecting and redistributing resources among numerous diverse societies.

As a result, the political landscape of Syria and Mesopotamia was fragmented into numerous principalities controlled by dynasts of various ethnic or social origins. These interwove diverse cultural idioms to demonstrate legitimate authority over their localities. In fact, despite the hostility that certain Jewish texts aired toward Greek practices, most local dynasts, including Jewish, Nabataean, Emesene and Ituraean ones, cultivated a vast spectrum of diverse forms.¹¹⁴ The Hasmoneans of Judea eventually expanded their realm into southern Syrian and greater Phoenician territories populated by Seleucid Greek polities.¹¹⁵ While doing so, they integrated Greek symbols into traditions of Jewish kingship and priestly authority and even mimicked the performative “speech-acts” of Seleucid authority to demonstrate pre-eminence.¹¹⁶ In Commagene, Armenia, Elymais, Judea, southern Syria, and Arabia, dynasts combined Greek and Near Eastern idioms in similar ways as they ruled their home regions and expanded their principalities. Antioch and portions of Syria were even briefly controlled by the Armenian king Tigranes, who cultivated Greek idioms of power and endeavored to patronize Greek cities.¹¹⁷ By the early and mid-first century BCE, the former territories of the Seleucid empire were divided among dynasts of varied ethnicity. The expanding empires of Rome and Parthia subordinated them as clients, thereby effectively partitioning the Seleucid realm’s former spaces.

¹¹⁴ Kropp (2009b), (2010a); Myers (2010) discuss Ituraeans and Emesenes. The bibliography on Nabataea is vast and its archaeology always amassing, but see Politis (2007); Schmid (2008).

¹¹⁵ Josephus, *AJ* 13.254–58, 275–79, 356–76, 393–97; *BJ* 1.62–6, 86–9, 103–5. Berlin (1997); (2011) treats historical and archaeological background (with bibliography) of Palestine and Galilee. Andrade (2010) 346–49 discusses some significant features of Hasmonean expansion. Excavations at Tel Kedesh, which has revealed a Seleucid bureaucratic complex with ample documentary *bullae* and grain stores, show that the Hasmoneans appropriated the Upper Galilee by the late 140s. The finds are still being documented. Herbert and Berlin (2003), now (2012); Ariel and Naveh (2003).

¹¹⁶ Rajak (1996) 99–115, (1990) 261–80; Gardner (2007); Tal (2009) show how Hasmonean kings interwove Jewish and Greek customs and symbols to recast in innovative ways “native tradition” while resisting Seleucid imperialism (115). Ma (2000a) 105–11 analyzes how speech-act performances contributed to Seleucid hegemony and to Maccabean subversion.

¹¹⁷ Yon (2003): useful discussion of late Hellenistic Parapotamia/Mesopotamia. Hoover (2007) 296–98: date for Tigranes’ conquests. Likewise, *c.* 75 BCE the Armenian king Tigranes founded Tigranocerta, which he populated by transplanting Greeks and other ethnics. Plut., *Luc.* 22.7, 26.1, 29.3–4; Wright (2011) 128–30 suggests that Jebel Khalid, now abandoned, supplied colonists.

Conclusion

Much had changed in Syria between the reign of Antiochus IV and Pompey's arrival a hundred years later. Structural failure, civil war, and fragmentation had defined the Seleucid empire that Pompey formally recognized as defunct. Amid the chaos, one constant remained. Ethnic criteria mostly distinguished Greeks from "others" and determined who belonged to Greek civic polities. This tendency only abated when Roman imperial intervention prompted the inclusion of ethnic Syrians, Phoenicians, and "Arabs" in Greek citizen bodies. In its Seleucid context, Antiochus' failed effort to integrate diverse ethnicities into Greek civic systems anticipated what the Romans later implemented in Syria.

As Rome and Parthia partitioned the Seleucid empire's fragments, they transformed Syria from an imperial center to a cultural frontier. This status was perhaps best demonstrated by the unfinished temple to Zeus Olympius in Athens. This monument was to express Antiochus' greatness to the Greek world and signify how the Seleucid Greeks were perpetuating Athenian traditions. It also marked Athens' Greekness as central and authoritative. Athens was the model to be imitated even if Seleucid forms of Greekness deviated from it. Yet, the temple remained unfinished for three more centuries. Instead, the re-consecrated Jewish temple in Jerusalem survived the Seleucid empire, and it signified the ability of communities to assert the centrality of local traditions and of dynasts to demonstrate authority by integrating Greek symbols into local frameworks of non-Greek ethnic or social performance.

In contrast to the municipal coins of Antiochus' reign and the new forms of Greekness that they encapsulated, the Jewish temple and its Hasmonean priest-kings legitimated new forms of Jewish culture by translating Greek symbols into a discretely Jewish symbolic field. The disintegration of the Seleucid empire in many ways marked the momentary triumph of new expressions of local Jewish, Syrian, and other Near Eastern ethnic or social identifications that incorporated Greek symbols while also constituting a basis for resistance to the dominance of Greeks. The forms of Greek culture that the incomplete temple of Zeus Olympius in Athens exemplified had failed to bind the Near East's vast expanses. Instead, the Romans would integrate members of the Near East's ethnicities into Greek civic communities and thereby stimulate profound transformations in how Greekness could be expressed.

The ability for "barbarians" to adopt Greek idioms and earn recognition as Greek, which scholars deem characteristic of the Hellenistic period in

general, more defined the Roman Near East than the Seleucid kingdom. Seleucid Greeks conceived of social affiliation and cultural practice largely in ethnic terms, and membership in Greek civic collectives was generally extended to those identified as Greek by ethnicity. The Roman imperial authorities and their provincial proponents, by contrast, integrated members of Near Eastern ethnicities into Greek civic collectives, and this in many cases expedited the cultivation of classical Greek idioms among these ethnicities. In this sense, Antiochus' patronage of Antiochenes at Jerusalem was unique for its period. Likewise, despite possibilities for internal tension, some of Antiochus' Greek city-states integrated Near Eastern idioms into their corporate expressions of Greekness, and in ways that symbolized simultaneously Greek and various Near Eastern social affiliations. These innovative articulations realigned how Greekness could be expressed, but they more characterized the Near East under Roman imperialism than the Seleucid norms preceding Antiochus' reign. The following chapters now address how Roman imperialism affected its Near Eastern territories and Greekness within them.

CHAPTER TWO

The theater of the frontier *Local performance, Roman rule (63–31 BCE)*

The century of Seleucid decline preceding Roman imperial intervention in the Near East saw the rise of numerous local or regional dynasties vying for power, resources, and legitimacy. Amid their complex negotiation with Roman imperialism and the Greek cultural legacy of Seleucid intervention, these dynasties generated new expressions of ethnicity and legitimacy by cultivating Greek idioms. When the Romans arrived, they became another factor that authority figures had to negotiate. The testimony and materials of two notable men elucidate this context. The first, Cicero, embodied Roman imperial governance. The other, a regional authority figure, was Antiochus I of Commagene. Their encounter is a microcosm for the socio-political and cultural processes of the late Republican and triumviral periods that would structure the expansion of Syria's peer Greek polity network and its innovative Greek civic performances. It also exemplifies the tensions and discontinuities inherent in these processes and the complex, innovative, and "hybrid" cultural expressions of ethnic and social identification that they wrought. Antiochus' reign, which in part bridged the transition between Seleucid collapse and Roman intervention in Syria, therefore deserves examination.

Despite their variety, approaches to the Roman Near East and Greeks of the Roman empire typically accept certain dichotomies regarding cultural expression. As emphasized in the introduction, scholars often regard Greek culture and those of Near Eastern societies as static, binary phenomena. For many, assimilation to Greek norms connotes the meaningful cultivation of Greek identifications. Likewise, the retention of local Near Eastern traditions is often construed to constitute "nativist" resistance to the prevailing power structure or at least assimilation. Such explicit or implicit premises prompt scholars to use hybridity, creolization, the Middle Ground and their variants to describe residents of the Near East who inhabited the vast, ambiguous spectrum between two putatively stable poles. But as often implemented, these viewpoints essentialize and dichotomize Greek and

Near Eastern cultural categories. They ambiguously frame provincials as deviating from “authentic” Greek and Near Eastern social identifications.

Yet, the complex interweaving of Greek and Near Eastern idioms and the production of new cultural practices could have spelled innovative ways of being “authentically” at home in Near Eastern societies, if not indigenous. Moreover, what people often define as cultural “purity” or authenticity in truth has diverse and heterogeneous origins. These perspectives justify this chapter’s emphasis on the reign of Antiochus I of Commagene, who vaunted cultural hybridity and the interweaving of diverse ethnic lineages as the consummate expression of “pure” Commagenian culture. As his inscriptions indicate, he venerated ancestral Greek and Persian divinities because these gods authenticated his dynasty’s rule over Commagene and its subjects. The gods’ ineffable will had thereby made Commagene a hearth for both domestic and foreign elements and for his dynasty, despite its external Greek, Persian, and Armenian origins. All inhabitants of Commagene were to join in their official worship, whatever cultural traits they cultivated. In this way, Antiochus promoted among his subjects the cognition that they, regardless of ethnic origin, belonged to a regional community of Commagenians whose culture(s) inhabited a vast spectrum of heterogeneity. Expressions of Commagenian identification, or Commagenian culture, could thereby integrate Greek, Persian, and other societies’ idioms, and Commagene’s regional community could domesticate foreign genealogies and become their home, their hearth.

If Antiochus represents a complicated, “hybrid” way to assert legitimacy as the ruler of a Commagenian regional community, Tarsus of Cilicia, just to the west, represents the opposite. A settlement existing long before Alexander’s conquests, its residents had under Seleucid supervision reoriented their settlement as a Greek *polis* and had assumed many mainstream Greek cultural trends. Yet, Greeks and Romans still isolated Tarsus as an “imitation” Greek city, an issue that Part III also addresses. Roman authorities and classical Greek peers could formally recognize it as Greek, but it otherwise produced a “flawed” Greekness indicative of its eastern context.

The complex cultural performances of Commagene’s Antiochus I and Cilicia’s Tarsians did not happen in a historical vacuum. They occurred in the shifting imperial contexts of Seleucid and then Roman governance, and during the mid-first century BCE, they were fashioned in part for an audience of Roman imperial authorities. In fact, the famous Roman orator Cicero discharged a proconsulship in the province of Cilicia in 51–50 BCE, and his letters regarding imperial governance illuminate the gaze for which

provincials and client dynasts molded their cultural performances. As the next section clarifies, Cicero's treatment establishes the "theater" within which Antiochus I and the Tarsians acted, and it defines the expectations of Roman authorities and Greeks who judged them from more classical vantage points.

Cicero and provincial "theater"

In 60 BCE, the recent consul Marcus Tullius Cicero wrote to his brother Quintus, currently *propraetor* of Asia, that the "foundations" of a governor's *dignitas* were integrity, restraint, and caution toward the provinces' Romans and Greeks.¹ Cicero's statement indicates that he recognized that Greeks and expatriate Romans inhabited provinces that Roman magistrates directly governed. A governor administered concentrations of Greek cities; client kings oversaw other communities. Cicero then reminded Quintus that his overseas tenure was a "theater for your virtues," for which Romans and provincials constituted an audience.² He was therefore to imitate a poet or an actor who ensured that his final act was best.³ An administrator wielded institutional authority, but he performed for Romans and provincials who witnessed and judged. "So many citizens and allies, cities and communities" were "focusing their gaze" on their governor's "nod."⁴

When Cicero wrote this letter, he believed that "Fortune" (*casus*) had mandated that he would govern Rome and Quintus a province, but his "Fortune" was not so easy to script.⁵ Within a decade, Cicero would unwillingly play the part of a "just" governor in a provincial "theater." In the summer of 51 BCE, the Senate sent him to the peripheral province of Cilicia, which then extended from central Anatolia, across the Taurus mountains, and into the Cilician plain. Just over a decade earlier, Pompey had cleared the eastern Mediterranean of pirates, many of whom he settled in the Greek city of Soli, renamed Pompeiopolis, or elsewhere in Cilicia.⁶ He had then secured Asia Minor from the Black Sea kingdom of Mithridates and the Armenian kingdom of Tigranes, and he had curbed threats of a Parthian invasion. Yet, in 53, the Roman proconsul Crassus suffered a catastrophic defeat by Parthians just east of the Euphrates river. Cicero therefore had to ensure that Cilicia, populated by ethnically diverse clients and friends of Pompey, would not fall to Parthians or revert to harboring pirates and

¹ Cic., *Q. Fr.* 1.1.18.

² Cic., *Q. Fr.* 1.1.42.

³ Cic., *Q. Fr.* 1.1.46.

⁴ Cic., *Q. Fr.* 1.1.22.

⁵ Cic., *Q. Fr.* 1.1.43.

⁶ Strabo, 8.7.5; 14.3.3.

bandits. Amid these duties, Cicero formulated his governance to be that of Greek communities dispersed among a broader Cilician population, from which they were distinguishable by status.⁷

Accordingly, in Cicero's eyes, just rule needed witnesses, and he desired for Romans and Greeks to distinguish his *humanitas* from the savagery of his predecessor, "friend," and rival Appius.⁸ He therefore used the province to mold a desirable character. It was a stage on which he could perform his *virtus* for audiences of Romans, provincial Greeks, and local dynasts with whom he sought to establish personal bonds enhancing his status and influence.⁹ Greeks, dynasts, and members of the region's varied ethnicities adopted similar strategies as they encountered Roman administrators and expatriates. In fact, as Romans, Greeks, and local dynasts formed relationships, they increasingly forged and embodied shared rules of interaction that they could follow or manipulate. This process stimulated integration into the Roman empire on an institutional and cognitive level even while provincials maintained "discrepant" practices and experiences.¹⁰ It encouraged provincial competition for notable Romans' patronage, but it also empowered provincial clients to confer prestige upon choice Romans. In other words, Romans and provincial or royal elites served as audiences and judges of one another's behavior.

Indeed, Cicero knew that provincials, not just Romans, could identify and manipulate socially expected behavior to play their parts, to perform. A provincial's "nature" could lurk beneath "pretension" (*simulatio*); the face and tongue could lie. Many Greeks had learned through their virtual slavery to be "false." They assumed character masks and fabricated personae.¹¹ Accordingly, the strategies of imperial subjects determined in many ways the socio-political integration of Cilicia and Syria even as their perceptions and self-definitions were shaped by the empire's reconstitution of regional, social, and judicial categories.¹² Such subjects constantly fashioned, internalized, and exploited shared inter-subjective rules of interaction and modes of self-sculpting performance. Accordingly, dynasts of local or regional ethnicities reconstituted Greek and Roman symbols as

⁷ Cic., *Att.* 5.21.8, 12; 6.1.15–16; 6.2.5, for instance, suggests that he conceived of himself as administering Greeks and Greek *civitates* of Cilicia and, in a certain instance, of Salamis on Cyprus. *Fam.* 15.1.3, 15.4.10, by contrast, references Cilicians.

⁸ Cic., *Att.* 5.16.2–3.

⁹ Cicero's status as a *novus homo* certainly compelled him to emphasize his *virtus*. Wiseman (1971) 108–16.

¹⁰ Mattingly (1997a) 8–15, (2006) 15–18, (2011) 29–31; Barrett (1997) 59–63; discrepant experience.

¹¹ Cic., *Q. Fr.* 1.1.15–16.

¹² Ando (2010) examines Roman imperialism and its production of imperial subjects.

idioms of authority and status, not necessarily as emblems of Greek and Roman identification. Likewise, Roman authorities situated such “barbarian” philhellenizing kings within their symbolic worlds as legitimate rulers and shareholders in Roman *humanitas*. Cicero’s relationships with Near Eastern dynasts exemplify this trend.

Survival dictated that dynasts assume such modes of philhellenizing performance. While facilitating expressions of autonomous governance that frontier dynasts often exercised, Roman senators and subsequently emperors considered their realms Roman territory. Although they could respect local dynasts’ hereditary claims, they deemed these realms gifts that the imperial administration bestowed.¹³ Dynasts therefore had to win influential Romans’ approval or risk dismissal as “bandits” worthy of repressive violence. In many respects, the methods of control that frontier kings employed resembled those of their regional predecessors. They mobilized followers through lineage, personal charisma, and their ability to collect and distribute wealth by taxation and the exercise of violence. Yet, they increasingly had to forge meaningful bonds with Rome, and their relationships with Rome could inhabit in practice and perception the wide spectrum between equitable friendship and “vassalage,” autonomy, and dependence.¹⁴ To acquire Roman support, they often protected and patronized the interests of their territories’ Greek communities.¹⁵ They became *philhellēnes* and *philorhōmaioi*, titles through which they claimed to identify with their Roman imperial patrons and Greek aristocrats from nearby cities.¹⁶ The term *philhellēn* therefore had inclusive and exclusive connotations. It indicated that a king had adopted elite Greek behavior and had demonstrated his affection for Greeks without actually being a Greek. It seems that *philorhōmaios* had similar connotations amid the adoption of Roman customs.

Now that this chapter has introduced the complicity of Cicero and other Roman authorities in shaping performances of provincial theater, the remaining sections can examine how Antiochus I of Commagene, or *Theos Dikaios Epiphanēs Philorhōmaios kai Philhellēn*, negotiated imperial pressure. As the Roman administration sought to bring stable governance amid the smoldering embers of Seleucid authority, Antiochus’ dynastic and

¹³ Speidel (2005) 88–90. The Julio-Claudian emperors repeatedly deposed and reinstated Commagene’s royal family.

¹⁴ The term “client” serves certain utility, but Kaizer and Facella (2010a) 16–25 rightfully warn that dynasts could inhabit varied positions in relation to Rome that using the term “client” can obscure.

¹⁵ Andrade (2011).

¹⁶ Braund (1984) 106–7; Facella (2010) 186–91 maintain that kings adopted such titles to express affection for Rome, although they could be formal titles.

cultic monuments demonstrated his piety to the gods and generated experiences of a Commagenian regional community. His complex sacred sites and practices did not merely interweave diverse cultural idioms in ways that connoted power and royal legitimacy, but they also stressed Commagene's cultural centrality and perpetuation of "ancient" tradition despite its marginal location and "hybrid" idioms. While it is difficult to assess how successfully Antiochus negotiated the demands of Roman power-holders, Parthian authorities, and local subjects, the parallel example of Herod of Judea, a younger contemporary of Antiochus, is suggestive. It indicates that the activities of regional intermediaries such as Antiochus and Herod laid the material and ideological basis for Rome's subsequent consolidation of a Syrian province (or provinces) structured by a network of Greek polities that civic councils governed. But Romans could be very harsh judges of provincial performance in the Near East, even when they were judging assimilated civic Greeks. It is for this reason that Cicero understood the civic Greekness of Tarsus, Antioch, and similar polities to be illegitimate compared to classical ones, a tendency also illuminated by the geographer Strabo. In his letters and speeches, Cicero's rhetoric elided the distinction between Greek citizens and philhellenizing barbarians like Antiochus. Although Cicero represents how Roman authorities organized Near Eastern provinces into networks of Greek polities, he also reflects their treatment of them as culturally illegitimate. The Greek polities of Syria and Cilicia were "Greek, but not quite."

Cicero and Antiochus I: the encounter

The cult sites, inscriptions, and statuary of Antiochus I of Commagene interwove idioms of diverse cultural origins, and they bore connotations of royal legitimacy with which previous imperial processes had endowed them. Antiochus was Commagene's king, but since he dictated the sacral laws of its cults, he was in effect its chief priest. Commagene's administrative institutions were therefore similar to those of other Near Eastern temple communities, and through them Antiochus promoted Commagenian identification and group affiliation. Commagene, a rugged region between the anti-Taurus Mountains and the Euphrates, constituted the threshold between Roman and Parthian territory.¹⁷ It was a discrete region that previously had been governed by a neo-Hittite kingdom called "Kummuh" as

¹⁷ After 64 BCE, Antiochus even controlled Zeugma (Seleucia on the Euphrates) in Syria and Apamea on the Euphrates in Mesopotamia, which constituted a bridgehead separating Roman and Parthian territory. Facella (2006) 230–36; French (1991) 11–19.

late as the eighth century BCE.¹⁸ Persian and then Seleucid kings thereafter ruled it or acquired its vassalage, and as Antiochus' ancestors increasingly asserted autonomous authority over the second century BCE, they claimed descent from an Armenian satrapal and royal family called the Orontids and, by extension, the Persian Achaemenids. They also framed themselves as legitimate monarchs by adopting, adapting, and interweaving idioms of Greek, Persian, Armenian, and Syro-Hittite origin.¹⁹ Antiochus especially did so. As king, he even wore both an Armenian tiara and (subsequently) a Greek diadem.²⁰

Cicero was familiar with Antiochus before coming to Cilicia, and he deemed him a typical disreputable easterner. In 59, Cicero mocked Antiochus' efforts to renew the purple-rimmed toga that the Senate conferred upon him perhaps as a Roman citizen.²¹ When Antiochus warned the governor Cicero, whom he apparently did not meet in person, of the Parthian invasions of 51 BCE, Cicero lukewarmly received this information and expressed distrust for the king, despite the Senate's recognition of his royal authority.²² In fact, Cicero only marched against the Parthians when other dynasts verified the invasion, and he then moved his troops to the Cappadocian border because the region had frontier kings who "do not dare to be enemies to the Parthians." By doing so, Cicero intended to curb any invasion of Anatolia through Syria or Armenia and to prevent "revolutionary plans" of "frontier kings" (*fnitimi reges*).²³ Artavades of Armenia was one such king. Another was Antiochus, who aroused Cicero's suspicion despite his apparent Roman citizenship.²⁴ By Cicero's proconsulship, Antiochus may not have been worshipping explicitly hybrid divinities, but his dynasty's known links to royalty east of the Euphrates and cultivation of Near Eastern emblems of kingship, including an Armenian tiara, likely distanced him culturally from Cicero.

Romans like Cicero may have disparaged Antiochus' social background and cultural inclinations, but they still recognized his legitimacy as Commagene's ruler. As a dynastic ruler, he was best positioned to mediate the

¹⁸ Facella (2006) 73–77; Messerschmidt (2008); Blömer and Winter (2011) 18–22.

¹⁹ Antiochus' predecessors mostly cultivated Armenian idioms of authority. Blömer and Winter (2011) 23–24, 344. Facella (2006) 95–224 provides detailed discussion.

²⁰ From this point, the designations of Waldmann (1973); Crowther and Facella (2003), (2011) for the inscriptions of Antiochus I are generally followed. Crowther and Facella (2003) have improved Sx., So., and Ad. Antiochus adopted an Armenian tiara shortly after ascending to the throne, as the stela of Sofraz Köy (So.4–6, originally Wagner and Petzl (1976)) shows. Facella (2006) 228–30; Blömer and Winter (2011) 25. Around 62 BCE, he assumed a diadem; Ad.11; N.83, 103; As.84; So.15–17 (later insertion). Both items generally appear in his reliefs.

²¹ Cic., *Q. Fr.* 2.10. Facella (2005b) 96–98 analyzes Cicero's ridicule of Antiochus.

²² Cic., *Fam.* 15.1.2; 15.3.1; 15.4.3. ²³ Cic., *Fam.* 15.4.4. ²⁴ Cic., *Fam.* 15.2.2, 15.3.1.

demands of Roman intervention and his subjects' material needs and cultural expectations. Antiochus, however, intriguingly implemented a cultic program that represented what Romans deemed to be exotic. In fact, Antiochus' organization of Commagene's sacred sites and their monumentalization provided a material and ideological framework within which subjects could form meaningful bonds with their king and experience cognition of their regional Commagenian community amid cultural diversity.

Despite its marginal location between two empires, Antiochus stressed his kingdom's centrality by expressing links to ancestral Greek and Persian monarchs, gods, and customs, and he recast and interwove numerous cultural traditions into a regional symbolic context. Neglecting Aramaic, an administrative language of the Achaemenid Persians, in his official media, he carved inscriptions delineating the ritual laws for his holy sites in Greek. His inscriptions described him as a *philhellēn* and *philorhōmaios*, and he supported these claims by conferring benefactions upon Ephesus.²⁵ Such titles indicate that he did not frame himself foremost as a Greek or Roman. Instead, he extricated Greek idioms from their previous discursive frameworks and entangled them in a regional symbolic field. Within this field, he generated and articulated his royal Commagenian identification, his god-like status, and his reputation as "friend" of Greece and Rome. He positioned himself as both descended and distinct from the Greeks and Persians, and he stressed that his "fatherland" was Commagene, whose female personification he eventually erected beside his Greek and Persian deities.²⁶

In tune with its geographic liminality, Antiochus' kingdom of Commagene possessed Greek *poleis* like Zeugma and Samosata and was likely populated by heterogeneous descendants of Syrians/Arameans/Assyrians, neo-Hittites, Armenians, and Persians who continued to bear their complex cultural traces.²⁷ As inscriptions spanning his reign indicate, Antiochus organized such culturally diverse people into units of villages and cities that were to frequent nearby cult sites (*hierothesia* or *temenē*).²⁸ At these sites, they were to attend festivals that generated greater cognition of a Commagenian regional community, even if the Greek and Persian deities presiding over them were not "indigenous" to Commagene or worshipped locally. As described below, many divine images, dynastic

²⁵ *OGIS* 405; Fraser (1978) 360; Facella (2005b) 91. ²⁶ N.29–31, 54–57.

²⁷ Achaemenid Commagene is obscure; Facella (2009) 393–408 treats evidence.

²⁸ So.14–16 (early); BEc.29–32 (later); N.93–99 (later). Crowther and Facella (2003) 50–51 distinguish *hierothesia* (which possess tombs for members of Antiochus' dynasty) from *temenē* (sanctuaries without royal tombs).

statues, and inscriptions that Antiochus rendered in fairly (but not totally) standardized form throughout his kingdom combined idioms of Commagene's various societies. In fact, while the precise chronology of his inscriptions, statues, and reliefs is insecure, it is clear that Antiochus, initially favoring Greek manifestations, increasingly worshipped protective deities comprised of Greek and Persian elements and eventually depicted them as shaking hands (*dexiosis*) with him.²⁹ Such elements reflected Antiochus' links to the Seleucids and the Achaemenids, the predecessors of the Parthian Arsacids, and they conveyed royal legitimacy to diverse subjects and produced an institutional and ideological basis for their cognition of regional social commonality. On the east and west terraces of Nemrud Dağ, he cited his gods in Greek as "Zeus-Oromasdes, Artagnes-Heracles-Ares, Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes," and the female personification of "Commagene." A *nomos* inscription (an inscription containing sacral laws) of Arsameia on the Nymphaius, generally bearing similar titles, called the female divinity Hera Teleia.³⁰ As his reign progressed, Antiochus stressed how these gods preserved him from external dangers; their collective presence within his "fatherland" were closely linked to his "new fortune."³¹

No evidence indicates that Antiochus' sanctuary (*hierotherseion*) at Nemrud Dağ, where Antiochus was buried in a massive tumulus, was ever used for organized worship. Never entirely completed, it was perhaps built shortly before or after his death (c. 36 BCE) and represents Antiochus' cultic program as it existed late in his reign.³² Despite these issues, the sanctuary offers certain continuities with Antiochus' other cult sites and indicates how he variously cultivated Greek, Persian, and even remote Near Eastern traditions (Figure 1). At the sanctuary's east and west terraces, his reliefs showed him performing *dexiosis* with various gods, and his colossal statues, with sacred laws inscribed in Greek into their bases, presented him and his patron divinities as enthroned and sitting side by side. The tumulus and colossal statues followed neo-Hittite and Phrygian paradigms for representing royal power and authority.³³ His reliefs depicting *dexiosis* bore

²⁹ Most scholars accept this trend (including a relatively late date for *dexiosis* reliefs) but differ regarding precise chronological order. Wagner (2000a) 16–17, 23; Jacobs and Rollinger (2005) 138–44, 152; Crowther and Facella (2003) 62–65; Facella (2006) 279–91; Mittag (2011).

³⁰ N.53–59; A.250–53 (minus Ares, and with "Mithras-Apollo and Helios Hermes"); At.

³¹ N.60–62; BEc.15–18.

³² *NemDag.*, vols. 1–2; Facella (2006) 261–97 present the site and excavations. Crowther and Facella (2003) 67 discuss lack of cult activity. Antiochus' artistic likenesses were likely the works of Greek artists who incorporated Persian motifs but followed Greek conventions. Smith (1988) 103–4, 130–31; Facella (2005b) 93–94; and recent excavations in Moormann and Versluys (2002), (2003), (2005).

³³ *NemDag.* 1.150; Mellink (1991) 7–10. Gordion, Sardis, and Karaburun offer points of comparison. Now Messerschmidt (2011) on reliefs.



Figure 1. Colossal statues of Antiochus I and his patron divinities. East terrace, Nemrud Dağ.

iconographic parallels to those showing *dexiosis* between neo-Assyrian kings and neo-Babylonian or neo-Hittite vassals from centuries before, but they instead portrayed the gods as endowing Antiochus with the status of client or *theos*.³⁴ In this sense, Antiochus' monumental program, even if focusing on Persian and Greek roots, reflects his engagement with a complex web of lingering Mesopotamian, Levantine, and Anatolian practices and idioms.

Alongside such "ancient" precedents, Antiochus oriented himself most emphatically toward more recent empires that had integrated Commagene, namely those of the Persians, Armenians, and Macedonians. At Nemrud Dağ, his reliefs and colossal statues (with inscribed bases) portrayed Antiochus with an Armenian tiara, Greek diadem, and Persian garb, and they represented his gods in assorted Greek and Persian apparels and iconographic styles.³⁵ Apollo-Mithras-Helios-Hermes, for instance, wears Persian clothes. Antiochus also raised reliefs portraying his maternal Seleucid forebears and paternal Persian and Armenian royal ancestors, who

³⁴ Crowther and Facella (2003) 62–65; Jacobs and Rollinger (2005) 144–52; Facella (2006) 286–91; Messerschmidt (2011); Petzl (2003); Panaino (2007), emphasizing Persian concepts; Mittag (2011) 150–58; varied interpretations regarding significance and seemingly late date of *dexiosis* reliefs and "heavenly hands."

³⁵ *NemDag*. 1.100–50. Facella (2006) 228–30 describes Antiochus' specific tiara as celebrating his renunciation of his vassalage to Tigranes of Armenia. Panaino (2007) treats Antiochus' position between "Hellenism" and "Iranianism."

extended to Darius I, in their respective societies' dress.³⁶ In this way, Antiochus adopted diverse idioms of imperial authority, stressed how his Persian and Greek lineage validated his rule, and embedded his legitimacy in his worshipping of gods originating from both east and west of the Euphrates.³⁷

Despite variations, Antiochus' other cult sites in Commagene, like that at Nemrud Dağ, incorporated idioms of numerous societies.³⁸ Materials from these sites indicate that early in his reign Antiochus venerated gods with Greek names and iconographies and therefore did not worship hybrid divinities consistently. But they reflect the formation of an ideological program that Antiochus disseminated throughout his kingdom, with some shifts and nuances, as his reign progressed. It culminated in his sanctuaries at Nemrud Dağ and Arsameia on the Nymphaeus.³⁹ Like his inscriptions at Nemrud Dağ, a *nomos* inscription at the *hierotherision* for his father Mithridates Callinicus (Arsameia on the Nymphaius) ordered his priests to dress in Persian clothing when they performed sacrifices on his birthday.⁴⁰ Similarly, a relief at Arsameia, like one at Nemrud Dağ, showed Antiochus wearing an Armenian tiara, Greek diadem, Persian boots, and otherwise Near Eastern attire as he performed *dexiosis* with a nude Heracles-Artagnes (Figure 2). Finally, sanctuaries in Samosata and Zeugma contained Antiochus' formulaic cult inscriptions and eventually reliefs of his *dexiosis* with Apollo-Mithras, but Antiochus conceded to the Greek civic frameworks of these cities by featuring Apollo-Mithras in the Greek heroic nude, not in the Persian clothes that he wears at Nemrud Dağ and Arsameia on the Nymphaius.⁴¹ The Persian styles of dress and iconography with which he increasingly adorned his divine representations, with Persian apparel more frequently expected of his priests, distinguished his cults from those of the Greeks farther west.⁴² In fact, Antiochus' *hierotherision* at Nemrud Dağ and its "lion horoscope" relief perhaps commemorated a lunar eclipse of July of 62 BCE, when Pompey stabilized his rule. Some scholars posit that this event was thereafter commemorated in the Mithraic mysteries.⁴³ The links

³⁶ *NemDağ*. 1.125, 254–355. Messerschmidt (2000) 37–43; Facella (2006) 270–75, (2009) 379–92.

³⁷ Facella (2006) 291–94. ³⁸ Crowther and Facella (2003); Facella (2006) 279–91 treat variations.

³⁹ Dörner and Goell (1963) 36–139, 197–227: Arsameia. ⁴⁰ A.113–14, as N.124–32; Sz.8–9.

⁴¹ Waldmann (1973) 16–29 (Sx. and Sy.); Crowther (2003) 57–67. Crowther and Facella (2003) discuss the new Zeugma inscriptions (BEc. and BEd./BEe.) and improve Sx. with So. (69–74). Crowther and Facella (2011) present a new (fragmentary) stele from Samosata, and by analyzing it alongside Sx., Sy., and Sz., they theorize three sanctuaries of Antiochus there (362–63).

⁴² N.124–32; As.89; A.113; Sz.8–9.

⁴³ Beck (1998); (2006) 227–39. Jacobs and Rollinger (2005) treat date. What the relief represents is debated. Kaizer (2010b) 115.



Figure 2. Dexiosis relief of Antiochus I and Heracles-Artagnes. Arsameia on the Nymphaius.

between the cults of Mithras and Antiochus' gods and whether Mithraism even originated from Commagene, however, are unclear.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The articles of Schütte-Maischatz and Winter (2004) 79–195; Blömer and Winter (2011) 256–61 discuss the (probably second-century) mithrea of Doliche.

By interweaving Greek and Persian idioms, along with those of Assyrian, Anatolian, and Armenian authority, Antiochus presented himself as a legitimate monarch to surrounding empires and to Commagene's inhabitants. Previous imperial rulers of Commagene had significantly cultivated such idioms, and Antiochus' subjects probably endowed them with connotations of power. Even more, Antiochus' artistic program emitted a specific message of divine patronage. Antiochus therefore claimed on an inscription at Arsameia on the Nymphaius that his "prophetic inscription" announced with holy letters and its own voice the intentions of the gods to all types of visitors.⁴⁵ His sanctuaries were to indoctrinate his diverse subjects into the shared veneration of his patron divinities and his ancestors, and the king issued coinage depicting his facial profile adorned with a five-pronged Armenian tiara, just as the reliefs at Nemrud Dağ rendered him.⁴⁶ By decorating his sanctuaries and coinage with such diverse and interwoven cultural expressions, Antiochus promoted the concept of a Commagenian regional community, one which had possibly had a pre-Hellenistic precedent (Kummuh) and whose culture enjoyed varied points of origin. He thereby detached Greek, Anatolian, Assyrian, Armenian, and Persian symbols from their previous contexts of signification, and he reoriented them in a new symbolic framework to create coherent expressions of royal authority and to promote cognition of a Commagenian regional community, which itself was culturally diverse. As a consequence, Antiochus' subjects perhaps did not deem him a culturally "hybrid" king who had adopted foreign traditions but as a member of the Commagenian elite who wielded traditional, familiar idioms of royal power.

Antiochus and personified Commagene: a narrative of centrality and local subjectivity

The previous section has established how Antiochus interwove culturally diverse elements into his monumental and cultic display. But it is noteworthy how Antiochus framed such innovative and hybrid cultural expressions as ancient, timeless, and unchanging tradition for his subjects. While culturally eclectic, Antiochus' monuments coherently conveyed royal legitimacy authenticated by divine favor. In fact, Antiochus' sanctuaries and inscriptions stressed that his dynasty's heterogeneity did not merely derive from the previous centuries' cultural interactions in Commagene.

⁴⁵ A.189–94; compare N.109–11, 120–21. Wagner (2000a) 24; Jacobs (2000a) 35.

⁴⁶ *RPC* 1.3845–47; Facella (2006) 228–230; Gariboldi (2007).

They reflected the gods' plan to create and sustain a kingdom and dynasty dedicated to their worship, and Achaemenid and Macedonian rule, by implication, had contributed to this purpose. In addition, Antiochus presented his kingdom and its piety as protecting Commagene's divine monuments from the sacrilege of pillaging Gauls. In such ways, Antiochus' monumental and cultic program challenges notions of culture or cult as a static or unchanging system of forms. For Antiochus' gods, nothing was more "pure" than hybridity. Hybridity was the divinely intentioned substance of Commagenian culture(s), and it made Commagenian culture(s) as legitimate and ancient as any other.

While emphasizing the "heroic" qualities of his father Mithridates, Antiochus' inscriptions maintained that his piety (*eusebeia*) preserved his safety and prosperity amid the shifting and nebulous threshold of the Roman and Parthian empires.⁴⁷ His production of monuments, cult sanctuaries, and statues to the Greek and Persian manifestations of numerous protective deities made, as stated in his inscriptions at Nemrud Dağ, "the ancient reverence of the great gods the companion of a new *Tychē*."⁴⁸ He had therefore "chosen" to worship "all the ancestral gods from the Persian and Macedonian lands and the hearth of Commagene."⁴⁹ His statue of Commagene at Nemrud Dağ (labeled Hera Teleia elsewhere), which rendered the goddess as a woman dressed in Greek clothing, was his kingdom's personification and embodiment. By pairing her with gods bearing Greek and Persian names, Antiochus hinted that all such gods served as domestic divinities of Commagenians.⁵⁰ These deities, as they did at most of Antiochus' cult sites, accompanied lengthy Greek inscriptions justifying Antiochus' decision to raise these divine likenesses alongside images of himself. In these inscriptions, he emphasized repeatedly that his erection of cult statues (*agalmata*) alongside statues (*andriantai/eikones*) of himself and his ancestors constituted an expression of his *eusebeia*. He acknowledged that one of humanity's "most pleasurable benefits" was its piety towards the gods, and gods had rewarded his piety with a long and peaceful reign within the frontier's tumultuous environment.⁵¹

In addition, Antiochus' inscriptions over his reign increasingly maintained that his epigraphic ventures constituted "inviolable stelai" (*asyloi*

⁴⁷ Facella (2006) 212–15. Mithridates possessed the heroic epithet "Kallinikos" associated with Heracles. A.29–30.

⁴⁸ N.61–63, also (with variations) Sx.23; BEc.17–18.

⁴⁹ A.182–84, nearly identical in N.224–26; Sz.36–38. ⁵⁰ N.29–31, 54–57.

⁵¹ N.12–14, 26, 50–53, 105–6, 212–13; A.62, 78, 118; Sx.10–12; BEc.4–8 contain variations.

stēlai), “holy writing” (*hiera grammata*), and the “inscription of piety” (*anagraphē eusebeias*) expressing the intentions (*nous*) of gods.⁵² At Nemrud Dağ, his inscriptions bore “inviolable writing” on “holy bases for eternal time.”⁵³ As his reign progressed, Antiochus thereby bound his self-presentation and rule to his *eusebeia* and the divinely sanctioned authority that it acquired. He posited that his articulations of elite Commagenian culture and the regional community that he represented, although derived from Greek and Persian precedents, did not arise through his own machinations. They had long been intended by immortal gods, who had ordained the laws that Antiochus’ voice pronounced. He and his monuments merely transmitted divine judgments (*daímonios gnomē*), immortal reflection (*athanata phrontis*), and ancient honor (*archaia timē*) of gods.⁵⁴ Through such methods, Antiochus expressed local subjectivity amid increasing imperial pressures.

In some ways, Antiochus perhaps contributed to the erasure of local traditions by elevating overtly Greek and Persian divine manifestations to pre-eminence in his kingdom. At Arsameia on the Euphrates (Gerger), his inscription mentioned a sanctuary of the goddess Argandene, but his sacred laws (*nomoi*) did not explicitly stimulate veneration of this divinity of presumed Syro-Hittite origin.⁵⁵ Inscriptions and materials from Hellenistic/Roman Doliche suggest greater continuity with pre-Achaemenid Kummuh than Antiochus’ statues and reliefs. This is especially true for the cult stele to Zeus Dolichenos/Jupiter Dolichenus that imitated neo-Hittite images of storm gods standing on the backs of animals.⁵⁶ In fact, Antiochus’ tendency to treat his innovative cultural interweavings as his divinities’ intentions disguised the epistemological violence that he perhaps inflicted upon the types of Syro-Hittite continuities that persisted at

⁵² N.110; Np.9; A.11, 81, 190–91; Sx.7–8; Sz.31, 43 contain variations. ⁵³ N.8–10.

⁵⁴ Np.9–10; N.64, 121–22; A.92–94; BEc.5–7, 21–22; Sx.8 contain variations.

⁵⁵ G.50. Hera Teleia, as *NemDag*. 1.102 claims, approximates elsewhere to the goddess Commagene (Nemrud Dağ) and perhaps to Argandene (Arsameia on the Euphrates). Hoepfner (2000) 68 argues that many local gods could have been identified with similar Greek manifestations. By worshipping Greek and Persian divine manifestations, Antiochus perhaps shifted from the practices of his Orontid ancestors Ptolemaios, Samos II, and others who may have more emphatically worshipped Argandene at Gerger. Waldmann (1973) 11–13; G.9, 49–50. Antiochus erected a relief of Samos II at Gerger and perhaps a fragmentary inscription (Gf.).

⁵⁶ I offer gratitude to M. J. Versluys for thus observing to me Doliche’s importance for assessing Antiochus’ cult sites. Schütte-Maischatz and Winter (2004); the articles of Winter (2008b), (2011); Blömer and Winter (2011) 248–84 treat Doliche, the sanctuary of Jupiter Dolichenus overlooking it, the grottos for Mithras, and recent excavations (with bibliography). Blömer (2009) treats reliefs of storm gods in the region; Blömer (2011) analyzes a Roman-era stele from the sanctuary at Doliche; Blömer (2012) treats the cult, a new third-century (and stylistically Roman) bronze likeness (65–71), and cultural transformation (71–82).

Doliche and maybe other parts of Commagene. Yet, Antiochus' monuments, sacred rites, and inscriptions embedded the idioms of Greece and Persia in a new framework of signification through which Commagenian regional identifications could be expressed. Even if not being of "indigenous" origin and form, Antiochus' gods, including divine Commagene, operated within a symbolic universe that had recast them as Commagenian deities that his diverse subjects were to worship. In such ways Antiochus transformed his foreign "ancestral" gods into domestic deities by creating a "common dwelling" for them in the "hearth" of Commagene.⁵⁷

This notion that Antiochus' kingdom had become a "hearth," a home, to Greek and Persians gods that protected his *Tychē*, bolstered the narrative of centrality that Antiochus' monumental sites disseminated throughout his kingdom. As a "hearth," Commagene had domesticated this host of foreign gods in ways that made it, like Delphi, the cult center of the civilized world. Accordingly, in the inscription that he erected on the east processional way of Nemrud Dağ, Antiochus threatened that any general or bandit that violated his holy and inviolable (*hiera* and *asylos*) sanctuary at Nemrud Dağ should see the "images of Delphic power" through which he were to "suffer" the punishment "of the rocks of Parnassus" that the Gauls had endured. Violators were to suffer such punishment because the frosty and rocky nature of Nemrud Dağ was "homogenous" with that of Delphi.⁵⁸ This quotation cited the destruction of the Gauls who attacked Delphi in 289 BCE and maintained that just as Apollo had crushed these invaders with rocks from Parnassus, he should ruin anyone who violated the sanctuary of Nemrud Dağ.⁵⁹ Through such a statement, Antiochus distanced himself culturally from his Gallic neighbors to the northwest who had entered, plundered, and then settled Anatolia. As Antiochus was acutely aware, these Gauls did not possess his royal lineage, his connections to the Near East's older imperial powers, or his reputation for civility and piety. They were brutish outsiders to Anatolia and defilers, not protectors, of sacred sites. In such ways, Antiochus defined himself as the ethical opposite of Gauls, whose impiety was widely recognized as an innate trait. Antiochus' critique of the Gauls was a vivid reminder that when Roman magistrates began to govern eastern Anatolia and Syria, they were moderating ethnic disputes centuries old.

⁵⁷ N.26–28, 225–26; A.9, 181–83.

⁵⁸ Np.37–40. Waldmann (1973) 70, n. 1, 77–78; *NemDag*. 1.179–81 provide commentary, material context, and discussion of analogous "propyleia" inscriptions at Arsameia on the Nymphaius. Petzl (1976) 372 discusses the significance of *physis homogenēs*.

⁵⁹ Justin, *Epit.* 24.6.8.

Antiochus' verbal assault on Gauls has further implications. Because Antiochus' other inscriptions do not refer to Gauls when banning desecration, it must have been strictly applicable to his burial site and sanctuary at Nemrud Dağ.⁶⁰ By comparing any transgressor of the specific *hierothesion* of Nemrud Dağ to impious Gauls, Antiochus asserted himself as a civilized king and warned Romans, Parthians, and local dynasts to avoid "Gallic" deeds of impiety against his burial site.⁶¹ His statement maintained that a "Gallic" nature could be exhibited by the imperial powers with which he had to contend. Any defiler of Nemrud Dağ was in effect Gallic and would suffer the same destruction as the Gauls who had attacked Delphi.⁶² His inscription thereby asserted his moral authority to categorize imperial agents not meeting the ethical standards of Commagenians as "Gauls," whether they were Roman, Greek, or Parthian.

Antiochus' inscription thereby classified Nemrud Dağ as a Near Eastern version of the Panhellenic sanctuary of Delphi, a cultural center and an inviolable cultic sanctuary around which a Commagenian community could cohere.⁶³ By interweaving Persian ritual and iconographic elements with Greek symbols, Antiochus detached Delphi's significance from its Greek symbolic framework and recast it as denoting Commagene's importance and centrality. In such ways, he located seemingly heterogeneous forms of Commagenian culture(s) at the center of the civilized world, where his "domesticated" Greek and Persian divinities now dwelled, and dictated through Antiochus' interventions the premises on which the regional community of Commagene was based. Antiochus had translated and restructured Greek and Persian symbols to craft a field of signification within which he forged Commagenian identifications and narratives of centrality. The gods and people of Commagene could have foreign, culturally diverse roots, but Commagene was a "hearth," a home, that made all inhabitants into Commagenians.⁶⁴

Despite two occasions on which the royal family was deposed, Commagene remained the homeland of a distinctive regional community ruled by Antiochus' descendants for over another century. During this time no Roman or Parthian force perpetrated the Gallic act of defiling the sacred and inviolable sanctuary at Nemrud Dağ. Apollo's Parnassian rocks had kept them at bay.

⁶⁰ Dörner and Goell (1963) 56.

⁶¹ Jacobs (2000b) 49 stresses that Antiochus' culturally diverse cults were responses to the pressures of Roman and Parthian imperialism.

⁶² Np. 40–44. ⁶³ Waldmann (1973) 79 comments on Antiochus' affection for Zeus and Apollo.

⁶⁴ Antiochus' dynasty produced *rex Commagenorum*. Tac., *Ann.* 2.42.

The limits of Antiochus' legitimacy

Antiochus' self-presentation has substantial epigraphic and material documentation. It is however unclear whether Commagene's inhabitants were effectively integrated into the ideological framework that Antiochus' cult sites produced. In fact, the "Delphic" cult site at Nemrud Dağ apparently never housed festivals before Antiochus' death, and Arsameia on the Nymphaius shows little evidence of housing a residential population, despite Antiochus' claims.⁶⁵ Due to lack of textual and archaeological evidence, it is currently impossible to verify how Commagenians experienced his rule, and his descendants' subjects are noted for favoring "direct" Roman governance over dynastic rule.⁶⁶ Because the reign of Herod I of Judea is better documented, it can help formulate comparative hypotheses about the success of Antiochus' cultural program. Chapter 3 discusses Herod's activity, but this section suggests that Herod's "successes" as client king of Judea mirrored those of Antiochus. Even if Antiochus' cult reforms did not reach full fruition or survive his death, during his lifetime he laid the foundation for Commagene's subsequent Syrian regional affiliations by organizing his realm into a comprehensive social network.

As chapter 3 asserts, Herod stabilized his rule by negotiating a host of intersecting factors. While implementing brutally coercive violence, Herod enacted culturally complex displays to meet the expectations of imperial power-holders and clients. He amplified and consolidated a network of Greek city-states that could eventually be integrated into the Syrian province(s). His military obfuscated ethnic divisions. Finally, his massive building programs and urban planning stimulated interregional trade and bolstered greater Judea's regional economy. In such ways, Herod's rule sustained the material and ideological conditions that made it acceptable to many subjects. Even if Herod's subjects doubted that Herod was a legitimate king, they engaged in performative behavior conveying that they did so, and their visible, collective misrecognition of Herod's "illegitimacy" stabilized his realm. In this way, Herod's social organization of greater Judea "interpellated" its inhabitants as royal subjects by framing and determining their experience of the social world and its categories.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Crowther and Facella (2003) 65–67 emphasize the "failure" of Antiochus' cult reforms. Hoepfner (1983) 57–58 discusses Arsameia. Antiochus boasts of expanding the foundation of his ancestor Arsames and his father into a city with garrison in A.1–95, 128–30.

⁶⁶ Tac., *Ann.* 2.42. Blömer and Winter (2011) 343–45 and Versluys (2012) 50–51 stress the empirical limitations and that Antiochus' program may not have conformed to Commagenian expectations.

⁶⁷ Althusser (1984) 44–51 defines interpellation.

Decades before Herod consolidated power, Antiochus probably matched many of these successes. Pompey sustained Antiochus' legitimacy as a bulwark against Parthian incursions during the mid-60s BCE. Although many Romans distrusted Antiochus' loyalty, the Roman Senate stabilized his dynasty's rule. Also, unlike Herod, Antiochus even exercised a priestly authority that he had apparently inherited from his royal predecessors. This advantage perhaps authorized him to implement innovative but allegedly "ancient" cultic practices for his subjects in ways difficult for Herod, who deferred cult rituals to a distinct class of politically enervated priests.

Like Herod a generation later, Antiochus integrated symbols of diverse cultural origins in ways that framed him simultaneously as traditional and innovative. His holy sites, their tapestry of Greek, Persian, neo-Hittite, and neo-Assyrian idioms, and their references to Seleucid, Achaemenid, and Armenian royal ancestry were probably meaningful to subjects whose ancestors had been ruled by regimes using similar motifs. In such ways, Antiochus harnessed numerous and varied idioms of power, and unlike Herod, he wielded a "priestly" lineage. Similarly, Antiochus' building projects at various cult sites enhanced Commagene's regional economy. His cult activity organized Commagene into a coherent socio-political network that bolstered commercial activity. According to inscriptions that he raised over his reign's duration, he had divided his kingdom into units of villages and cities that were to attend festivals at nearby cult sites.⁶⁸ Assuming that these festivals attracted pilgrims, their organization produced markets for local commerce, provided employment for laborers, and therefore stimulated social networking, commercial transactions, and a consciousness of Commagenian commonality.⁶⁹ If his descendants' military bears any indication, Antiochus' army also integrated Commagenians of diverse backgrounds into a cohesive institutional structure and mentality.⁷⁰ In short, while located at the rugged and oftentimes turbulent frontier of Rome and Parthia, Antiochus' kingdom enjoyed socio-economic stability. Such stable governance, favorable economic conditions, and social structuring of Antiochus' kingdom "interpellated" Commagene's inhabitants as royal subjects and members of a Commagenian regional community, despite internal ethnic or cultural variation. As in Herod's kingdom, even

⁶⁸ So.14–16 (early); BEc.29–31 (later); N.93–99 (later).

⁶⁹ Facella (2005a) analyzes how Commagene's economy was underpinned by fertile land and proximity to the Euphrates.

⁷⁰ Antiochus' army was much smaller than Herod's. The army of Antiochus IV of Commagene was organized in a Macedonian fashion. Josephus, *BJ* 5.460–65.

if dissenters did not believe in Antiochus' legitimacy, it is likely that they visibly acted as if they did. Such acting stabilized the regional order.

Another feature that Antiochus and Herod shared was that their successors did not maintain autonomous governance amid the political and cultural pressures of Roman imperialism. While Commagene's eventual integration into the provincial system was not so physically destructive as Judea's, which was characterized by two bloody revolts in 66–73 or 74 CE and 132–35, it coincided with cultural realignment. After his death, Antiochus' successors immediately undid his cult reforms, discontinued work at his *hierothesion* at Nemrud Dağ, increasingly avoided his culturally hybrid presentation, and conformed to mainstream Greek and Roman expectations until Commagene was integrated into the empire's provincial system. Its diverse residents were thereafter known primarily as Syrians. Yet, despite all this, Herod and Antiochus successfully negotiated multivalent imperial and cultural pressures during their lifetimes.

In the century or so after his reign, Antiochus' successors, like Antiochus himself, organized the territory of Commagene into a social network. But now Greek collectives constituted its core principle. In fact, after Antiochus' death, his dynasty almost immediately abandoned his culturally heterogeneous performances and adopted more "mainstream" classical Greek or Roman idioms as they governed.⁷¹ Under their supervision, Commagene's cities, especially Samosata, assumed the civic features of Roman imperial Greek city-states in Syria and became more amenable to integration into Syria's peer polity network.⁷² As the ruling dynasty and the local elites increasingly adopted classical forms of Greek culture, assumed Roman names, and patronized Greek civic life, they promoted increased partiality toward Roman imperial patronage.⁷³ When Antiochus' successors established or supported the ideological realignment of Greek

⁷¹ Crowther and Facella (2003) 65–68; Facella (2006) 294–95. After Antiochus' reign, Commagene's dynastic family enhanced its connections to Ephesus and Chios and minted coins modeled on Roman issues. The coins showed dynastic family members wearing Greek diadems but not Armenian tiaras. Facella (2005b) 92–93, 101; Smith (1998) 140; *BMC Galatia* 106–8, Pl. 14.9–10, 15.1–3; *RPC* 1.3852–67.

⁷² During the mid-first century CE, Antiochus IV founded and patronized Greek civic polities in Cilicia. Facella (2006) 326. When the Roman administration integrated Commagene into the Syrian province in 73 CE, Samosata became the metropolis of the regional *koinon* of Commagene. *HA Hadr.* 14.1. By Caracalla's reign, Commagenians conceived of Commagene as organized (in Latin) into "quattuor civitates" that honored the emperor. *IGLS* 1.42–44. Winter (2008a) 44–46 stresses Antiochus I's contributions to this process, as he distinguished *poleis* from villages. But note the important reservations of Versluys (2012) 48–59 regarding Commagenian identity at this time.

⁷³ The altar, inscription, and tomb at Sofraz studied by Schmitz, Sahin, and Wagner (1988) 86–91; Speidel (2005) reflect increased cultivation of Roman idioms (although the date is debated).

polities that incorporated local ethnicities as citizens, the Roman administration exerted governance through local Greek elites rather than royal middlemen.⁷⁴

After two brief periods of rule by Roman governors, the Roman administration annexed Commagene in 73 CE and removed its king, Gaius Julius Antiochus IV Epiphanes, to mainland Greece.⁷⁵ If the Syriac *Letter of Mara bar Serapion* was produced in this invasion's immediate context, which is debatable, it documents an Aramaic-speaking elite in Samosata that studied Greek literature and Stoic philosophy.⁷⁶ Although the royal family resisted briefly, no formidable opposition to Roman authority materialized as it had in Judea, and Antiochus' descendants migrated to Italy and Greece, whose classical forms they already cultivated.⁷⁷

Thereafter Commagene's ruling dynasty uniformly conformed to Roman imperial pressures in ways that wrought cultural transformation and provincial integration. The monumental tomb in which Gaius Julius Antiochus Epiphanes Philopappus, a Roman senator, Athenian archon, and the "last" king of Commagene, was buried exemplifies this resolution. Located on the Hill of the Muses in Athens, the tomb's façade sported Latin and Greek inscriptions that celebrated Philopappus' consulate (114 CE), archonship, and regal title. Statues likewise displayed him in a Roman toga and a Greek *himation*, not as performing *dexiosis* with "syncretic" divinities or wearing Persian and Armenian garb.⁷⁸ By the emperor Trajan's reign (98–117 CE), Commagene's royal family had largely embraced mainstream classical Greek and Roman culture.

Cicero and "imitation" Greeks

As governor of Cilicia in 51–50 BCE, Cicero recognized Antiochus as a legitimate king sanctioned by Rome's Senate, but he maligned his cultural presentation. Cicero's categorization of Antiochus as untrustworthy,

⁷⁴ Although strategic concerns certainly played a role, the favorable relationship between the royal dynasty and Roman emperors perhaps delayed provincial integration. Facella (2010) 195–97.

⁷⁵ Commagene was integrated into Syria by Tiberius (19 CE) (Tac., *Ann.* 2.42; Josephus, *AJ* 18.53–54), restored to the royal dynasty (Cass. Dio, 59.8) and then apparently reintegrated by Caligula. Claudius restored it to the royal dynasty (Cass. Dio, 60.8; Josephus, *AJ* 19.276).

⁷⁶ Ramelli (2004), (2005), (2008) 2561–66; Merz and Tieleman (2008); Rensberger (2010); some (but not all) essays of Merz and Tieleman (2012) support the letter's potential first-century or similarly early context. But see Chin (2006).

⁷⁷ Josephus, *BJ* 7.242–43; *IGLS* 6.2796, from Heliopolis-Baalbek.

⁷⁸ Smith (1998) 70–71; Kleiner (1983) 82–85 discuss the tomb's putative Roman models, including the arch of Titus. *OGIS* 409–413; *CIL* 3.552; *IG* 2/3².3451.

“marginal” (*finitimus*) and undeserving of a toga isolated him from legitimate Greek and Roman culture. Other Romans thereafter suspected Antiochus’ loyalties. After Pacorus’ forces overran Syria (40–38 BCE), Marcus Antonius and his surrogate Ventidius accused him of colluding with the Parthians and besieged Samosata. Antonius, however, may have simply coveted the king’s wealth.⁷⁹ In any event, his liminal persona enabled Romans like Cicero and Antonius to disparage his loyalty.⁸⁰

Cicero as governor did not merely interact with local dynasts; he also had to stabilize the local authority of notables and civic councilors of Greek polities. In fact, regions with networks of Greek collectives were generally subject to the governor’s direct supervision; dynasts oversaw other regions. Yet, despite Cicero’s governance of Cilicia’s Greek city-states, he deemed their Greek cultural forms to be crude distortions or imitations of those at classical centers such as Athens and Rhodes. Cicero’s proconsular itinerary conveys this premise. As Cicero traveled to Cilicia in 51, he lodged with the philosopher Aristos at Athens. He even considered granting personal benefactions to Athens, much like his predecessor Appius and his friend Atticus.⁸¹ By contrast, Cicero did not esteem cities in Cilicia or Syria, which by then traced mythological links to Greek heroes and cities of Greece, especially Argos.⁸² The region’s Greeks failed to assert the same authenticity as classical cities, and many Greeks believed that the term *soloikizein*, to speak improper Greek, was derived from Soloi, a Cilician city.⁸³

Even Tarsus, Cilicia’s metropolis, could be maligned by Greeks and Romans who valued more “classical” landscapes. The Tarsians claimed Argive descent, and they had established Greek civic and educational institutions based on classical models.⁸⁴ Strabo, from Pontus, even claimed that the city’s cultivation of philosophy (*philosophia*) and system of education (*paideia*) surpassed those of Athens, Alexandria, and other such places. Yet, few recognized this. Only locals studied there, and while Greeks from Cilicia began their education at Tarsus, they usually migrated to schools in classical regions.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Plut., *Ant.* 34.2–3; Cass. Dio, 48.20–22. Facella (2006) 243–48.

⁸⁰ The Parthians may have procured Antiochus’ death. Cass. Dio, 49.23.4. Sullivan (1990) 197, 405, n. 18 critiques Dio’s testimony, which omits a distinguishing epithet for the “regal” Antiochus whom the Parthians killed.

⁸¹ Eilers (2003a) 92. Cic., *Att.* 5.10.5, 6.6.2 describes Atticus’ benefaction. Appius built a *propylon* at Eleusis, and Cicero had considered making a similar contribution for the Academy. *Att.* 6.1.26.

⁸² Scheer (2003) 226–31.

⁸³ Strabo, 14.2.28; Scheer (2003) 226; Salmeri (2004) 204–6.

⁸⁴ Strabo, 14.5.12.

⁸⁵ Strabo, 14.5.13.

The imperial ascendancy of Octavian (later Augustus) provides the background for a rare occasion in which an expatriate sophist returned to Tarsus, and this event highlighted Tarsus' marginality.⁸⁶ Following Julius Caesar's death, Brutus and Cassius had marched their armies through the eastern empire to seek allies, extort money, and crush the incomplicant. Tarsus, loyal to Caesar, felt Cassius' wrath.⁸⁷ After the battle of Pharsalus, Tarsus endured the sway of Marcus Antonius, but Antonius' surrogates and the supporters of Octavian, Caesar's heir, engaged in factional strife. According to Strabo, the Stoic philosopher Athenodoros, a teacher of Octavian, returned to Tarsus after Antonius' defeat. Although elderly, he dissolved the faulty constitution (*politeia*) of the demagogue Boethos, a "bad poet and a bad citizen" who had earned Antonius' support. Through him and his supporters, Tarsus had produced degenerate versions of Greek *paideia* and *politeia*.⁸⁸

Athenodoros' very name reflects Cilicia's complex cultural matrix. While Athenodoros meant "the gift of Athena," his father's name Sandon was that of a local deity (Sandon or Sandan) frequently depicted on Tarsus' municipal coins as standing in neo-Hittite fashion on a horse-like animal.⁸⁹ Nonetheless, Athenodoros was unimpressed with his native city, and he exiled Boethos and other supporters of Antonius who had flooded Tarsus with wretched examples of Greek civic and literary performance. In response, some of Athenodoros' enemies compared his immoderate tendency to "expel" (*ekballein*) citizens to flatulence, and they inscribed on his house's walls "labors for young men, consulting for middle-aged men, and farts for old men." Taking the graffiti as a joke, Athenodoros humorously added "thunder for old men" to it, but in response to this comic gem, an unknown enemy splattered fecal matter on Athenodoros' house.⁹⁰ Despite such vandalism, Athenodoros retained his customary wit, and when he addressed the assembly the next day, he stated about Tarsus' body politic, "We can see the disease of the city and its bad physical maintenance in many ways, but especially from its excrement."⁹¹ The city had philosophy, an educational system (*paideia*), and a Greek constitution (*politeia*), but since most persons of talent lived abroad in classical cities, it had excrementally inept thinkers, poets, and citizens through whom the "disease of the city" could be perceived. Tarsus was full of shit, and if its polluting

⁸⁶ Strabo, 14.5.14; Dagron and Feissel (1987) no. 29 document other Tarsian academics.

⁸⁷ Cass. Dio, 47.24.3, 26.1–2. ⁸⁸ Strabo, 14.5.14.

⁸⁹ Robert (1963) 500. *BMC Lycaonia*, 177–78, Pl. 32–33 (Sandon); Meyer (2001) 517, Fig. 2 (both images).

⁹⁰ Strabo, 14.5.14. ⁹¹ Strabo, 14.5.14.

“dirt” was to be cleansed, Athenodoros had to expel it with his thunderous farts.⁹²

Cicero in general shared this sentiment. If Cicero treated the poet Archias as exemplifying Greek *paideia*, it was because after being educated in an Antioch in Syria or Asia Minor, he had traveled to “the rest of Asia,” Greece, and the classical Greek cities of Sicily and Italy where he built his reputation.⁹³ The same logic applies to Cicero’s favorable opinion of Philodemos, a native of Gadara in Syria.⁹⁴ As Cicero believed, Greeks could hail from the interior of Asia Minor and Syria, but their legitimacy as Greeks hinged on their participation in the civic or academic environments of classical cities. As governor of Cilicia, Cicero had to recognize the official and administrative divisions between Greek citizens and regional ethnics who were not members of Greek polities. He had for this reason conceived of his proconsulship as his governance of Greek cities. Yet, when Cicero crafted a hierarchy of legitimate Greekness, the Greeks of interior Anatolia and Syria occupied its lowest rungs unless they were educated in classical Greek cities. Syria was a marginal barbarian landscape.

In fact, Cicero’s invectives against Aulus Gabinius, a perennial enemy, exploited Syrian stereotypes, including those that emphasized androgyny and sexual deviancy. After Gabinius became governor of Syria, Cicero indicated that Gabinius’ moral degeneracy was produced by his origin from Syrian slaves.⁹⁵ As governor of Syria, Gabinius had merely returned to his ancestors’ native land, to exercise the same androgyny and sexual deviancy that he had cultivated at Rome. Gabinius’ litany of crimes allegedly included depilation and his dancing nude at banquets amid the din of tambourines.⁹⁶ Cicero exploited such infelicities to conflate Gabinius with an immoderate woman who despotically ruled Syria. He was a “Semiramis,” an ancient Assyrian queen notable for her promiscuity, and a “shaved dancing woman” (*saltatrix tonsa*).⁹⁷ Cicero, by implication, was Gabinius’ precise opposite: a legitimate and autonomous Roman male.

According to Cicero’s rhetoric, Gabinius was a lusting and immoderate Syrian slave queen who merely disguised himself as a Roman man worthy of senatorial rank. Cicero’s invective suggested that while Gabinius exhibited certain “Roman” linguistic or cultural trademarks, he nursed a deviant

⁹² Douglas (1996) 1–6, 114–28 stresses human inclinations to associate “dirt” with “disorder” and with threats to both physical and social boundaries.

⁹³ Cic., *Arch.* 4–5. Tarentum, Regium, and Neapolis were among these cities of Italy and Sicily.

⁹⁴ Cic., *Pis.* 68–70. Also, Cicero studied rhetoric with notable Syrians, but in Athens and other classical centers. Cic., *Brut.* 313–16; May (2002) 5–6.

⁹⁵ Cic., *Pis.* 1. ⁹⁶ Cic., *Pis.* 22. ⁹⁷ Cic., *Pis.* 18. Similarly, *red. sen.* 13: *calamistratus saltator*.

“Syrian” character waiting to irrupt to the surface. Such a durable character could prevent Syrians from becoming “real” Greeks or Romans even as they adopted Greek or Roman language or culture, and Cicero did not distinguish between Syrians and Greeks from Syria through any meaningful ethnic, cultural, or linguistic criteria. A Syrian slave who spoke Greek, for instance, was just an extremely worthless Syrian.⁹⁸

Cicero’s magisterial activity followed similar logic. While heeding the proper official distinctions between citizens of Greek *politeiai* and “Cilicians” or other Near Eastern ethnics, Cicero still perceived the Greek cities of Cilicia and Syria to be somewhat Greek, but not legitimately so. As governor of Cilicia, he therefore visited Tarsus only because it was Cilicia’s governmental hub. He did not visit Antioch at Daphne, a city which, like Tarsus, claimed Argive descent.⁹⁹ For Cicero, Cilicia and Syria were marginal, frontiers to be defended. When his tenure as governor ended, he hurried to Ephesus, Athens, and Rome.

Cicero’s views typified those of Romans, the Greeks of classical cities, and Syrians educated in cities such as Athens. As subsequent chapters discuss, Greek and Roman authors constructed the inhabitants of the Near East, whether Greek citizens or not, as “Hellenizing, but not quite Greek” or “Greek, but not quite.” In unique instances, they indicated that Syrians and Cilicians who adopted Greek culture faked Greekness; their performances of Greek or Roman culture merely concealed their internal barbarian characters. Cicero’s own testimony, which rendered an Anatolian Greek as “not so much like a Greek as a Mysian or a Phrygian,” conforms to this trend.¹⁰⁰ Later generations perpetuated such logic, stressing that Achaia was the “true and pure Greece” and that after the Macedonians had conquered the Near East, they “degenerated into Syrians, Parthians, and Egyptians.” It was widely believed that Romans too had felt or would feel the corrupting influence of ruling over Syrians.¹⁰¹ For Romans such as Cicero, Syrians, “Asiatics,” and Jews could not be “true” Greeks. They were “nations born for slavery.”¹⁰² In this sense, the errant senator Gabinius, who had “gone Syrian,” and the culturally complex Antiochus I of Commagene, who dared to wear a toga, occupied the same space in Cicero’s mental spectrum of gender and status. Both were androgynous Syrian slave queens who usurped the external markers of Roman status and identification.

⁹⁸ Cic., *De or.* 2.265, attributed to Cicero’s grandfather.

⁹⁹ Strabo, 16.2.5. Strabo maintains that both cities claimed descent from followers of Triptolemus, who searched for Io.

¹⁰⁰ Cic., *Q. Fr.* 1.1.19.

¹⁰¹ Pliny, *Ep.* 8.24.2; Livy, 38.17.11; Florus, 1.47.6. Belayche (2000) 12–15 discusses these perceptions.

¹⁰² Cic., *De pro. con.* 10: *Iudaeis et Syris, nationibus natis servituti.*

Conclusion

The cooperation of Cicero and Antiochus I to ensure the stable governance of Cilicia and Commagene coheres with the themes of previous and subsequent chapters. The Seleucid Antiochus IV endeavored to stabilize his kingdom by stimulating new expressions of Greekness that interwove diverse cultural idioms. Political, social, and economic factors curtailed his success. By contrast, Antiochus I of Commagene generated new expressions of Commagenian identification and stabilized his rule by implementing a similar process of cultural interweaving, but in his case, Roman imperial intervention underpinned more favorable political, social, and economic factors. The resources and legions of governors such as Cicero supported Antiochus against hostile incursions from the east. Antiochus in turn organized and exploited local resources and generated a royal ideology in ways that stimulated internal stability, compliance, and a regional social identification. In fact, the success of Antiochus and his descendants eventually made his dynasty obsolete. Because his successors organized their subjects into Greek *poleis* that meshed in socio-political, economic, and cultural terms with Syria's peer polity network, Roman emperors integrated Commagene into the Syrian province and distributed its kings' former tasks among imperial magistrates or Greek civic councilors. The next few chapters examine how this process impacted Greek civic expressions.

Antiochus' reign also suggests how Near Eastern social identifications could transform in ways that integrated foreign idioms. Examples such as his should encourage scholars not to associate Greek culture with assimilation and Near Eastern forms with some form of "nativist" resistance. They should facilitate alternatives to the conventional scholarly understanding of hybridity and the like as operating within an ambiguous, amorphous space between the concrete poles of Greek and Near Eastern culture. Antiochus vaunted a Commagenian regional identification that interwove and domesticated Greek and Persian idioms within Commagene's hearth, and he established religious institutions that promoted social affiliations and networks. It is difficult to discern whether his subjects adopted such cultural idioms or were integrated into his cults' practices. Comparisons with Herod I suggest that they at least recognized his royal legitimacy, which Greek and Persian symbols could signify and which building projects helped substantiate. But Antiochus' premise that Commagenian culture(s) could transform and domesticate diverse foreign idioms while still being experienced as timeless, "pure," and ordained by gods is significant. Commagenian society was a hearth for foreign genealogies and idioms, and

nothing could be more domestic or characteristic of Commagenians than hybridity and variation. The same can be argued for Syrianness and, in certain contexts, Greekness.

Cicero's tenure in Cilicia elucidates a further dimension of Roman intervention. Magistrates of the republic, like Cicero and subsequently the triumvirs, maintained provinces organized into networks of Greek city-states, and they would increasingly consolidate the authority of Greek elites over them. Yet, while Cicero recognized the political significance of kings like Antiochus and councilors of communities such as Tarsus, he deemed them culturally illegitimate. Antiochus I of Commagene was a degenerate Syrian; Tarsus did not have the authenticity of classical Greek polities. These tensions paradoxically constituted the hallmark of Rome's success in maintaining an imperial hierarchy. Roman power-holders consciously patronized Greek civic life, but they still deemed Cilicians and Syrians of even recognized Greek *poleis* not to be quite Greek. It was this patronage of "imitation" Greek cities, of polities that were simultaneously Greek and not Greek, that facilitated Syria's integration into Rome's provincial landscape. Yet, these tensions also enabled Syrians to advocate the legitimacy of their Greek and Roman performances and eventually produce a Roman imperial landscape centered on Syria. In the 260s–270s CE, Palmyrene dynasts interwove "hybrid" cultural forms reminiscent of those that Antiochus I cultivated, but by doing so, they created their own "imitation" Roman empire and framed their home city as a Greek and Roman cultural center. Before this phenomenon can be examined, however, the next few chapters must first explore how Roman authorities and local notables consolidated the hegemony of Greek civic orders that in turn stabilized the maintenance of Roman imperial space.

CHAPTER THREE

Converging paths *Syrian Greeks of the Roman Near East (31 BCE–73 CE)*

Some time during Septimius Severus' reign, a Syrian died while engaging in commerce in Gaul. According to the bilingual epitaph raised by his companion, the deceased was Thaimos Ioulianos, son of Saados, and he was from the hinterland of the *polis* Canatha. The inscription also intriguingly framed Thaimos as being Greek and Syrian. It stated in Greek that he was a councilor and citizen of the Canothenes in Syria, and the Latin described him as a Syrian decurion from Septimian Canotha.¹ The name Thaimos, son of Saados, suggests ethnic "Arab" or Syrian descent. But as this chapter stresses, Thaimos' inscription links him foremost to Greek and Roman idioms. He was a civic councilor of one of Syria's Greek peer polities, his epitaph was in Greek and Latin, and he was also known as Ioulianos.

At first glance, Thaimos' epitaph seems merely descriptive of Syrian geographical origin. Aside from onomastics, nothing is distinctly Near Eastern about it, and as the introduction notes, scholarship often posits that any meaningful Syrian ethnic articulation must be anchored in Near Eastern cultural continuities and Aramaic usage. But these perspectives can be refined. Not all meaningful social affiliations in the ancient world were necessarily ethnic; references to identification as Syrian could have indexed a meaningful social category not based on putative genealogy. Moreover, the cultivation of Greek was not necessarily deemed un-Syrian in Near Eastern contexts. The categories of Syrian or "indigenous" and their expressions often transformed to meet shifting imperial demands. In fact, the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos* was a regional social category incorporating a vast spectrum of cultural practices and putative ethnicities. Within this spectrum, as chapter 10 suggests, ethnic Syrians could express "indigeneity" through Greek idioms and value the same "civic founders" as ethnic Greeks despite perceptions of genealogical difference. Thaimos perhaps

¹ IGR 1.25=IG 14.2532=IGF 141. IGLS 13.2.9810–11, 9815, 9817 are civic inscriptions of Canatha.

even deemed himself an ethnic Syrian who cultivated Greek idioms too. But as discussed below, Thaimos' epitaph primarily illustrated his civic affiliations within a Greek polity and a cognitively experienced regional collective called the Syrian *ethnos*.

How Thaimos' epitaph stressed his civic status as both a Syrian and a Greek is all the more illuminating when read alongside a Byzantine scholiast's discussion of Iamblichus, the second-century author of a novel (the *Babyloniaca*). When commenting on how Photius, a ninth-century bishop and polymath, had treated Iamblichus as Babylonian, the scholiast maintained that Iamblichus was Syrian by *genos* from both patrilineal and matrilineal lines. He was in fact "not a Syrian of the Greeks who inhabited Syria, but of the autochthonous," and he was a native Aramaic speaker.² If one accepts that the scholiast retrieved this information from Iamblichus' now lost writings, his statement validates two intersecting processes. The first is the experience in Roman imperial Syria of "Syrian" as an ethnic label marking the putative genealogical descendants of Assyrians or Arameans, whose "ancestral" language was Aramaic. Such Syrians could distinguish themselves from ethnic Greeks. Yet, this passage also strains to distinguish ethnic Syrians from Greeks called Syrians, and it therefore indicates that Greeks in Syria had meaningfully assumed the label "Syrian" in ways that broadened its applicability and transformed it into a meaningful social category with civic implications. Ethnic Greeks and ethnic "autochthonous" could enact and conceive of common Syrianness within the purview of the Syrian *ethnos*, a cognitively experienced regional collective, and within *poleis* as Greek citizens.

The examples of Thaimos and Iamblichus represent a fascinating intersection of civic Syrianness, ethnic Syrianness, civic Greekness, and both Greek and Near Eastern culture (as normatively defined). They also have a bearing on indigeneity, an issue which Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess* illuminates for this period. As the introduction and chapter 10 discuss, Lucian's text delineates how (As)Syrians participated in distinctly (As)Syrian rites and social expressions at the cult site of Hierapolis. But they did so while constantly integrating Greek idioms, myths, and narratives of Near Eastern history into their As(Syrian) cult practices, sacred topographies, and historical memories. According to the text, (As)Syrian priests at Hierapolis variously deemed Dionysus, Deucalion, and Semiramis to have founded its original temple, and they claimed that various material remains verified these accounts.³ Otherwise, Lucian's description notes that many features

² Photius, *Bibl.* 94.75b (Henry (2003) 2.40, n. 1).

³ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 1, 10–17.

of Hierapolis were foreign to those of classical Greece; its gods for instance bore names and iconographies distinguishing them from Greek ones. But aside from specifying foreign words that Assyrians used, his account does not clarify their dominant language.⁴ Roman-era inscriptions in Greek otherwise indicate that Hierapolis was anchored in Syria's Greek peer polity network (chapter 10).⁵ Indigeneity may seem like a hard, obvious category pegged squarely to Near Eastern languages and culture. But as Lucian's Hierapolis shows, Roman imperial Syria featured a complexity of intersecting civic and ethnic categories, and their cultural expressions transformed and bore polyvalent significations to accommodate shifting social dynamics. Syrian ethnicity or indigeneity could therefore incorporate and be conveyed through Greek language, narratives, and symbols.

The examples of Thaimos, Iamblichus, and Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess* complicate many standard treatments of social identification and cultural expression in Roman imperial Syria. As the introduction outlines, some eminent scholars deny that a Syrian culture existed and posit that the term Syrian only had geographic significance. Their premises stress that inhabitants of Roman imperial Syria during this period never expressed ethnic unity through a stable set of non-Greek (i.e. Near Eastern) idioms or Aramaic language. Because the Roman imperial Near East produced diverse regional cultures and never assumed a common single "Syrian culture" independently of Greek traditions, Syrian culture cannot be meaningfully discussed. Others have addressed the issue of Syria's cultural complexity by harnessing theories and terms from other academic fields. Most such theories pinpoint how Syrians "translated" and interwove idioms from many societies and cultural systems, thereby creating new symbolic universes and cultural expressions. In various ways, creolization, hybridity, mestizaje, the Middle Ground, the Third Space, boundary crossing, and cultural translation have been invoked, in isolation or varying combinations, to explain the complexity of Syrian practices.

But as the introduction notes, these formulations raise problems. For one, they assume that the cultivation of Greek idioms was an un-Syrian practice, that Syrians could not integrate Greek idioms into expressions of Syrianness. Likewise, such formulations tend to imply or even specify that Syrian identifications were merely descriptive geographic ones, but they omit the importance of "Syrian" as a meaningful social marker. The province(s) or client principalities of Syria, as defined by the Roman

⁴ *Syr. D.* 31–35; Lightfoot (2003) 43, on language.

⁵ Hierapolis hosted Greek games and a civic council. *IGLS* 1.233; *IGR* 3.1012=*IGLS* 4.1265.

imperial administration, geographically circumscribed the regional civic or social category of “Syrian,” and this category underwent shifts and tensions. But the category, being endowed with civic connotations, still informed meaningful interactions and cognition of social Syrianness. It structured Syria’s multilingual and multi-ethnic inhabitants in ways that made them part of a broader institutional and interactive network, and it allowed affiliation within this network to be expressed through diverse cultural idioms. Syrian cultures therefore existed, but they were never uniform and unitary. They shifted and transformed, and a vast spectrum of Syrian expressions, both overlapping and in tension, coexisted. “Syrian” thereby signified a meaningful social commonality that interwove many intersecting ethnic, linguistic, and cultural striations. Syrians experienced a common civic identification and cognition underpinned by their shared relation to the provincial or social status of “Syrian,” even if they did so from different but interwoven linguistic, ethnic, and socio-political vantage points.

This chapter therefore examines the consolidation of Greek civic communities and a Syrian regional consciousness during the Roman imperial period. This process was facilitated by how client kings like Antiochus I of Commagene projected legitimate authority and consolidated their kingdoms amid Roman imperial pressure. Roman imperial authorities subsequently harnessed the efforts of client dynasties such as Antiochus to consolidate the empire’s provincial system. As this chapter maintains, the reigns of Augustus, his successors, and their client kings stimulated transformations that expanded and stabilized networks of Greek civic communities. Under their supervision, Greek polities integrated members of local ethnic groups into their civic processes in ways that prompted ethnic Syrians to assume civic Greek identifications and interweave Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern idioms into new expressions of Greekness and Syrianness. By contrast, in the Parthian empire, which perpetuated Seleucid paradigms, Greek communities policed ethnic divisions.

This contrast between Roman and Parthian imperialism highlights how unique the impact of Roman imperial intervention was on cultural politics of the Near East. Roman and Parthian imperial figures established remarkably similar bonds of reciprocity with client kings and local notables. But despite this similarity, the Roman imperial administration expanded the local authority of Greek city-states in extremely unique ways. The Roman administration and its client kings, including those of Judea and Commagene, established new Greek polities and oversaw their incorporation into peer polity networks. Beneath their influence, Greek

city-states that had existed during the Hellenistic period increasingly extended citizenship to members of local ethnicities and integrated them into citizen bodies. While not all inhabitants of the Syrian province(s) earned recognition as civic Greeks through this process, which notably occurred in many parts of Asia Minor, it still enacted substantial social and cultural transformations.⁶ Key inscriptions and statements of Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, Nicholas of Damascus, and New Testament works indeed illustrate how Herod I, his dynasty, and eventually direct Roman governance stimulated new expressions of Greekness and Syrianness in greater Judea and southern Syria. These trends facilitated the eventual integration of client kingdoms into the Syrian province(s).⁷ They produced Greek civic bodies that expressed innovative forms of Greekness that often embraced Near Eastern symbols. Under such conditions, Syria's inhabitants experienced "Greek" and "Syrian" as intersecting civic categories, not simply distinct ethnic ones. Likewise, Syrian regional identifications and social affiliations were signified through a vast spectrum of diverse local cultures (that is, Syrian cultures), and Greek performances increasingly departed from classical ideals.

The encounter: imperial authorities and client dynasts

After Marcus Antonius' demise, the *princeps* Augustus (31 BCE–14 CE) and his family exercised Roman *imperium* over the Near East, and like Marcus Antonius, they often used it to authenticate the governance of local authorities. During his reign, Augustus oversaw abundant cultural interactions among Roman authorities and local dynasts.⁸ Such interaction stimulated the foundation of Greek *poleis* within the realms of Augustus' clients. According to Suetonius, they founded cities called Caesarea and contributed to his plan to finish Athens' temple of Zeus Olympius. These dynasts also dedicated this temple to Augustus' *Genius*, and whenever in his presence, they shed their royal insignia and wore the Roman toga. The Jewish king Herod I can be included among this number.⁹

By cultivating the symbols of clientage and shared culture, dynasts of varied ethnicity in the Near East, like Herod, formed bonds with the

⁶ Ando (2010) 35–40 examines Greekness in Asia Minor.

⁷ Aliquot (2009) 35–69 discusses the establishment of Greek city-states in Lebanon.

⁸ As Augustus boasts of in *Res Gest.* 27.

⁹ Suet., *Aug.* 60. Since Herod was "perpetual" overseer of the Olympic games, he was affiliated with this renovation. Josephus, *AJ* 16.146–49; *BJ* 1.422–28 records Herod's benefactions to Greek cities in Greece and elsewhere. Bowersock (1965) 42–61, 100, n. 2 discusses relationships between client kings and Augustus, along with Caesarean cities.

Roman ruling power. For this reason, they often assumed Roman names, founded Greek polities named after imperial family members, established cults to Rome or Augustus, and wore togas. These acts defined them as clients of the Roman emperor while stressing points of commonality with Roman elites. Their cultivation of such symbols of power also marked them as authority figures to local audiences of Greeks and various ethnicities. In fact, such a context stimulated client kings to found and patronize cities incorporating Greek and Roman symbols of culture and authority on an unprecedented scale. This activity facilitated the material conditions and dense polity network that would enable Greek civic authorities to govern communities in the region. As a result, when client kings patronized Greek civic life, they made their ruling dynasties obsolete.¹⁰

Still, the endowment of the Near East's Greek polities with expanded authority and power was an incremental and situational process. Under Augustus, the Roman imperial family and its legates maintained order by negotiating with client dynasts controlling parcels of territory. In fact, even if a single family exerted autocratic power after the civil conflicts of the 40s and 30s BCE, imperial legates of Syria, who commanded legions and administrative personnel, could still cultivate destabilizing personal connections and accrue resources by forging relationship networks and clientage bonds with Near Eastern dynasts. In this sense, they perpetuated the Republican modes of elite competition that existed when Cicero governed Cilicia, and they behaved like Parthian kings who forged bonds with their nobles and local dynasts in precisely this way.

The rivalry of Gnaeus Calpurnius Piso, a Roman legate of Syria, and Germanicus, great-nephew of Augustus, exemplifies such trends. During his reign, Augustus had dispatched family members to the Near East for tasks of political importance.¹¹ When the emperor Tiberius instituted administrative reforms within Syria, he likewise sent Germanicus, his adopted son, to oversee such changes, despite having appointed Piso governor of Syria. By granting *maius imperium* to Germanicus, Tiberius made him the supreme imperial authority within the eastern Roman empire.¹² Germanicus died in Antioch in 19 CE after numerous interactions with Near Eastern dynasts and kings. Most famously, he attended a banquet staged by the royal family of Nabataea. Piso was also present, and despite

¹⁰ As Butcher (2003) 88–89 observes.

¹¹ Augustus' grandson Gaius and his son-in-law Marcus Agrippa undertook administrative missions into the eastern empire. Cass. Dio, 55.10.18–21; Suet., *Aug* 93, *Tib.* 12.2; Josephus, *AJ* 16.12–65; Philo, *Leg.* 291–97.

¹² Tac., *Ann.* 2.43; S.C. *de Cn. Pisone patre* 34–36, accessible in Potter and Damon (1999).

being Tiberius' friend, he was an inveterate critic of the Julio-Claudian family and, as Tacitus indicates, an image of Republican *libertas*.¹³ During this banquet, the royal family offered a large gold crown to Germanicus and a smaller one to Piso. In turn, Piso criticized Germanicus for behaving not like a representative of the Roman *res publica* but like the son of a Parthian king. Only a *rex Parthus* accepted crowns from such clients at banquets.¹⁴

Piso's abuse, however, disguised certain trends of Roman *imperium* in the Near East. While implicitly positing that the imperial family did not have autocratic power, it also denied that Republican magistrates, such as Pompey and Cicero, had behaved as regional dynasts by establishing bonds of personal clientage with local power brokers. These bonds were in fact essential to Roman imperial rule. While the Roman administration directly governed regions organized into networks of Greek *poleis*, it initially empowered existing dynasts to control territories populated by various ethnicities. As they governed, these dynasts solicited the patronage of Roman magistrates. They also formed bonds of reciprocity with diverse elite subjects and priestly institutions through "ancestral" customs, such as banqueting and hunting.

In these respects, Roman governors followed social conventions similar to those of Parthian kings and Near Eastern dynasts. Parthian elites and Near Eastern royals cultivated certain Greek cultural elements, and Orodes II therefore used Crassus' head in his staging of Euripides' *Bacchae*. But they also fashioned themselves as exceptional archers, horsemen, and banquet hosts to consolidate clientage bonds.¹⁵ Germanicus had accordingly crowned a Pontic royal named Zeno king of Armenia, who properly hunted and banqueted, but he snubbed Zeno's rival candidate Vonones, who had a Greek entourage (*comites Graeci*) and disdained such practices.¹⁶ In fact, this Vonones had previously been king of Parthia, but his cultivation of Greek and Roman idioms alienated certain aristocrats, who then supported Artabanus III.¹⁷ Artabanus had therefore owed his throne partly to his lack of Greek culture, and his "Scythian" qualities sustained him during the usurpation of the philhellenizing Tiridates.¹⁸

Such forms of interaction were significant in regions not possessing the administrative organs and civic councils of Greek cities, through which Roman magistrates otherwise governed. Yet, when Roman governors sought to incorporate local dynasts within their own patronage webs,

¹³ Tac., *Ann.* 2.35 describes Piso as possessing *species libertatis*. ¹⁴ Tac., *Ann.* 2.57.

¹⁵ Plut., *Crass.* 32–33.

¹⁶ Tac., *Ann.* 2.2, 56.

¹⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 18.47–49.

¹⁸ Tac., *Ann.* 6.43 for Tiridates' "foreign softness." Ehrhardt (1998) 301–2 discusses.

they assumed tactics similar to those of Germanicus, Piso, and Parthian royals. In fact, the principate's Roman magistrates interacted with local dynasts in the same way that Republican magistrates had during the late Republic. While Nabataean kings banqueted with their subjects to reaffirm their personal bonds, this social convention helped them maintain meaningful connections with Roman imperial authorities. Piso's presence at the banquet indicates as much. Despite his posturing, he too played the part of a *rex Parthus* as he solicited clients by the same means. Piso's meager crown may have even inspired his wrath; Germanicus' larger crown marked him as a more valuable patron and Roman imperial figure. In fact, after Germanicus' death, Piso exploited his personal networks among local dynasts, including those of Cilicia, to fight Germanicus' surrogates. Eventually captured, the Senate convicted him of inciting civil war after Germanicus' death.¹⁹ He killed himself.

The encounter: client dynasts and local subjects

Despite the shared strategies that Roman governors and Parthian royals implemented to maintain their patronage webs, their activity could not disguise the unique transformations of the Roman Near East. Julio-Claudian imperial governance had effects different from those of Parthian kings. The reigns of Augustus and his successors accelerated the foundation of Greek cities in Syrian regions governed by Roman magistrates or local dynasts. Such foundations accompanied extensions of Greek citizenship to local ethnics, and dynasts sometimes governed such civic foundations in what many Greeks and Romans considered "eastern" or "barbarian" territory. While Roman governors perpetuated Republican modes of competition by, paradoxically, acting like Parthian kings, the need for imperial support stimulated Rome's client dynasts, including the Herodians of Judea and the successors of Antiochus I of Commagene, to patronize Greek civic life. By doing so, they generated favorable material conditions for the Greek civic councils that would displace them as pre-eminent authority figures.

The turbulent but effective reign of Herod I of Judea, which the previous chapter introduced, exemplifies how Rome's client kings negotiated imperial pressures and their subjects' diverse expectations to stabilize their realms.²⁰ As a dynast and eventually a king, Herod faced many social,

¹⁹ Tac., *Ann.* 2.69–84, 3.7–19; *S.C. de Cn. Calpurnio Pisone patre*.

²⁰ The recent output on Herod and his dynasty is vast. Richardson (1996); Kokkinos (1998), (2007); Roller (1998); Bernett (2007a); Rocca (2008); Jacobson and Kokkinos (2009); Günther (2005), (2007), (2009); Netzer (2006) inform my narrative.

political, cultural, and economic challenges as he established royal legitimacy. By implementing repressive violence, engaging in complex cultural negotiation, and overseeing socio-economic conditions that stimulated compliance, Herod prompted many subjects to recognize outwardly his royal authority. In this sense, the material and ideological mechanisms of Herod's governance bolstered his regime's stability.

Amid Hasmonean decline, Herod, son of an Idumaeen dynast of Judea, became prominent during the Parthian invasion of 40–38 BCE, which drove him into collaboration with Rome's triumvirs. His resistance to the Parthians endeared him to Roman authorities and helped him navigate the transition of power from Anthony to Augustus. Numerous of his Greek civic foundations, including Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste, or monuments, such as that near Panias, honored the emperor in name and cult.²¹ While sporting temples and cult statues, his Greek polities integrated members of local ethnicities and, after his death, constituted the basis for greater Judea's integration into the Roman provinces of Syria and Judea, albeit with the ample tension and violence discussed in the sections to follow.

While Herod maintained Rome's support, he also patronized his subjects' religious activity. Despite negative memories after his death, which include Josephus' criticisms, certain contemporaries deemed him a legitimate ruler and patron of Jewish cult.²² He was not a priest like Antiochus I of Commagene, and he lacked significant genealogical connections to the Zadokite or Hasmonean priestly lineages. But Herod rebuilt the Jewish temple of Jerusalem. This maneuver modeled him on the line of King David, whose tomb he notably entered, and framed him as Jerusalem's protector from idolatrous forces.²³ By ending the Hasmonean priestly line and repeatedly apportioning the chief priesthood to more insignificant families, Herod undermined the priesthood's authority and its production of ruling alternatives.²⁴ Despite the overt dissent of Pharisees and other segments that deemed Herod's deeds idolatrous or illegitimate, his activity appeared

²¹ Josephus, *BJ* 1.401–21; *AJ* 15.292–98, 331–41, 16.136–41. Roller (1998) 85–125; Netzer (2006) 81–118; Bennett (2007a) 52–145 analyze these foundations (with bibliography). Following sections of this chapter discuss them as Greek *poleis*. Recent excavations and studies of Caesarea for this period are Raban and Holum (1996); Holum, Stabler, and Reinhardt (2008); Raban (2009). The location of the temple to Augustus near Panias is still debated. Overman, Olive, and Nelson (2007); Berlin (2011) 96–106 offer different interpretations.

²² Rocca (2008) (esp. 21) intriguingly argues for Herod's success.

²³ Josephus, *BJ* 1.401–2, 5.184–247; *AJ* 15.380–425. *AJ* 16.179–82: David's tomb.

²⁴ Josephus, *AJ* 15.50–56, 161–78; *BJ* 1.431–37 describes Herod's murder of Hyrcanus and his own brother-in-law Aristoboulos. Josephus, *AJ* 15.365–79, along with Richardson (1996) 240–47, 250–61, Rocca (2008) 251–61; 281–91 treat priests and dissenters.

many subjects, with overt dissenters constituting “marginal” figures.²⁵ Otherwise, his critics tacitly accepted the current necessity for Herod’s regime despite their displeasure. Herod’s building program, recourse to violence, and presentation of his innovations as cultic tradition shaped the critical positions of his complicit and dissenting subjects. Even those who disbelieved Herod’s legitimacy engaged in visible or collective acts of recognition through which they performed as though believing.²⁶ Their performances stabilized Herod’s governance.

Unlike Antiochus I, Herod governed Greek and Jewish populations plagued by tensions rooted in Hasmonean Jewish expansion; in the 60s and 50s BCE, Pompey and subsequent Syrian governors stripped the Hasmoneans of many cities of greater Phoenicia and Coele Syria that they had conquered and (re)organized them as Greek *poleis*. The Roman administration accordingly confined “the land of the Jews” (*hē gē tōn Ioudaiōn*), or the “official” land of Judea, to the regions of Judea proper (eventually including Idumaea), Galilee, and Perea.²⁷ For the next century, it also located “liberated” Greek *poleis*, which it framed as part of the broader Syrian *ethnos*, variously in the Syrian province, in a district of Syria or province confusingly called Judea (different from *hē gē Ioudaia/tōn Ioudaiōn* and Judea proper), or in the realms of Herod and his successors. Such reorganization created tension and ambiguity. Some Jews still considered “the land of the Jews,” their scriptural inheritance, to be roughly the various territories that the Hasmoneans and then Herod had controlled, that is, greater Judea.²⁸ They did so regardless of their inhabitants’ backgrounds or the Roman empire’s more restrictive definitions. Ethnic antagonisms among Greeks and Jews, who debated whether their communities were in *’Eretz Israell hē gē tōn Ioudaiōn* and were thus pre-eminent, persisted thereafter in greater Judea and southern Syria. But while controlling greater Judea and founding new Greek polities such as Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste, which were located where Pompey and successor governors had (re)established the Greek communities of Strato’s Tower and Samaria, Herod’s regime

²⁵ Seth Schwartz (2001) 45–48.

²⁶ Žižek (1989) 30–33 discusses ideology as not belief, but acting as if believing.

²⁷ Josephus, *AJ* 13.395–97, 14.74–76, 87–91, 15.328–30; *BJ* 1.155–57, 166–70. Gabinius organized territories that Romans defined as “the land of the Jews” into districts. *BJ* 3.51–58 places Idumaea in Judea proper.

²⁸ Josephus *BJ* 2.97, 7.364; Nicholas of Damascus, *FGrH* 90.136 (Stern (1974) no. 97): as Greek cities. This chapter uses “Judea” generically for this “greater” Judea, which Strabo 16.2.21, in cohesion with the Hasmoneans, locates between the anti-Lebanon mountains and Gaza (but inland). Sartre (2001a) 507–15, 530–57: Herodians and governors. The Hasmoneans apparently called their territory Judah, not Israel. Goodblatt (2009); (2012): Judah/Israel and their gentilities.

enforced the Romans' definition of regions where Greek or Jewish communities were sovereign. It therefore dictated whether urban landscapes housed pagan sanctuaries and figural images in ways that antagonized the religious scruples and aniconic preferences of many (but not all) Jews.²⁹

Under such circumstances, Herod, like Antiochus I, mined numerous traditions of royal or political authority. His alignment with Rome prompted him, like his contemporaries at Emesa and the Ituraeans of the Bekaa valley, to organize his kingdom and interweave cultural traditions in ways that accommodated Roman authorities and subjects, whether Greek, Jewish, or otherwise.³⁰ By naming cities after Roman emperors and incorporating Italian architectural trends into many constructions, Herod acted as a Roman imperial figure. He founded Greek city-states replete with pagan temples and human likenesses, such as Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste, in imitation of Alexander the Great and his Greek successors, but he avoided doing so in what Rome defined as *hē gē tōn Ioudaiōn*, where Jews most rigorously opposed pagan temples and figural images.³¹ His rebuilding of the Jewish temple of Jerusalem, which harnessed Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern architectural precedents, tied him to Israel's Davidic kings.³² He also generally respected Jewish scruples regarding pagan temples and figural images at Jerusalem and in "the land of the Jews." He introduced Greek and Roman games and trophies honoring Augustus' conquests to Jerusalem, which received mixed responses but were apparently not repeated. Although dissenters eventually opposed the gold eagle that Herod raised at the gate of Jerusalem's temple, it was exceptional and did not necessarily antagonize many Jews.³³ Such dissension more frequently plagued Herod's successors or subsequent Roman procurators, who did not combine repressive force and cultural negotiation as effectively.

²⁹ Josephus, *AJ* 15.328–330; Andrade (2010). In Judea, Jews' opinions regarding human and animal images varied, but many Jews considered them idolatrous and deemed that public spaces of a truly "Jewish" city should be devoid of pagan sanctuaries/altars, human images, and perhaps animal likeness. For variations in Jewish (an)iconism, which this study cannot treat, see Fine (2005) 60–81 and now Ehrenkrook (2011). Likewise, Berlin (2002); (2011) explores how Galilee was culturally different from surrounding territories.

³⁰ Kropp (2009b); (2010a) describes how the Ituraeans and the royal house at Emesa navigated Greek, Roman, Syrian, and "Arab" cultural practices. Myers (2010) treats Ituraeans.

³¹ Similarly, Herod Antipas later founded Tiberias in Galilee as a "city of Jews." Josephus, *AJ* 18.36–38; *BJ* 1.168; *Vit.* 376–79.

³² Rocca (2008) 19–63, 370–78. Josephus, *BJ* 1.401–2, 5.184–247; *AJ* 15.380–425, 16.179–82. Netzer (2006), (2007); Patrich (2007) analyze architectural inspirations.

³³ Both events stimulated some dissent or conspiracy, but these appear limited. Josephus, *AJ* 15.267–91, 17.149–63; *BJ* 1.648–54. Herod also minted coins representing eagles at Jerusalem, and temple dues were paid in Tyrian shekels (with images of Melqart). Ariel and Fontanille (2012) 115–19. Greeks also accused Herod of pillaging temples. Josephus, *AJ* 15.354–57.

While governing diverse ethnicities, Herod never generated a single regional community in ways that Antiochus I of Commagene had. He still maintained a socio-political system that alleviated persisting ethnic or social conflicts. His allocations of land to supporters and veterans stabilized compliance and food production, and his monumental and civic foundations bolstered local economies. They provided markets and commercial centers for agrarian surpluses and endowed laborers with occupations. His foundation of Greek city-states, which cohered with the peer polity network of Syria's Greek cities, facilitated commercial interaction and regional trade.³⁴ His rebuilding of the Jewish temple and patronage of major Jewish festivals also augmented networking and commercial activity among Jews of Judea proper, Galilee, and Perea.³⁵ Unlike his successors, Herod kept a substantial army that integrated various ethnicities into a coherent institution.³⁶

Finally, by establishing and patronizing his realm's Greek city-states, Herod's governance stimulated new expressions of Greek citizenship that integrated ethnic Syrians and Near Eastern idioms. Such activity made his dynasty subsequently obsolete and stimulated provincial integration as greater Judea's Greek city-states cohered with the peer polity network of Syria under Roman supervision. This aspect of Herod's rule helped facilitate the innovative expressions of Greekness that Syrians generated amid Roman imperial intervention. The following sections therefore treat the participation of ethnic Syrians in Greek civic life, its production of new expressions of Greekness and Syrianness, and how it antagonized Jews pressured to participate in Greek civic-cultic practices.

The formation of "Greek" and "Syrian" civic communities

According to the Jewish philosopher Philo, the emperor Augustus had earned a reputation for "adding to Greece by means of many Greeces" and for "bringing Hellenism to *Barbaria*." Philo's statement distinguished the regions of classical Greece from the eastern empire's "barbarian" portions that Greeks had only inhabited in the prior few centuries, namely Syria,

³⁴ Woolf (2005) analyzes economic prosperity in Augustus' Mediterranean; Dar (2007); Geiger (2009a); Jensen (2012) analyze Herod's Judea and Galilee. Hirschfeld (2007) discusses estates under Herod. Josephus, *AJ* 16.136–41; *BJ* 1.415 documents regional Greek games at Caesarea.

³⁵ Seth Schwartz (2001) 47; Rocca (2008) 287–91.

³⁶ Rocca (2008) 134–40. Comparatively, Pollard (2000) 7–8 examines institutional identity in the Roman army.

Cappadocia, and interior Egypt.³⁷ It in fact described Rome's integration of Near Eastern ethnics into Greek *politeiai* under the Julio-Claudians, and the Greek civic foundations of Herod facilitated this process. Herod's foundations, especially Caesarea Maritima, were among Philo's "many Greeces" that the Augustan principate stimulated.

By contrast, in Parthia, ethnic Greeks inhabited distinct communities that replicated Seleucid practices of excluding ethnic "Syrians." Parthian kings, who selected local notables to be magistrates or client kings, did not establish "Greek" civic communities comprised of diverse ethnic components, as Roman imperial authorities had.³⁸ In local contexts, self-governing members of Near Eastern ethnicities acted in solidarity against ethnic Greek communities in ways not characteristic of Roman Syria, where ethnic Syrians were becoming Greek citizens. In Parthian lands, civic ideologies and structures reaffirmed ethnic and cultural differences by situating them in separate civic communities. Members of various ethnicities could therefore solidify into factions that contested local Greeks, as they did at Seleucia on the Tigris in the 20s and 30s CE.

Territories that Rome controlled differed. Around 60 CE, a faction that the Jewish author Josephus called both "Syrian" and "Greek" debated with local Jews over which group had sovereignty over Caesarea.³⁹ In his *Jewish War*, the Jews stressed that they possessed the city because Herod I, Caesarea's founder, had been a Jew. Yet, the "Syrians" argued that Herod I had erected temples and statues to create a "city of Greeks."⁴⁰ Their statement indicated that the Herodians' patronage of pagan sanctuaries and human images, being antagonistic to many Jewish sensibilities, marked a discretely Greek civic space. Also, in Josephus' *Jewish Antiquities*, the Syrians stated that the city had initially been called Strato's Tower and had possessed no Jewish residents under that name.⁴¹ This debate reflected ambiguity among Greeks and Jews in southern Syria and Judea regarding what constituted "the land of the Jews" (*hē gē Ioudaia/tōn Ioudaiōn*) in the centuries after Hasmonean Jewish expansion and Roman intervention. It did so even as Herodian kings and Roman authorities endeavored to define the "the land of the Jews" as Judea proper, Perea, and Galilee by patronizing

³⁷ Philo, *Leg.* 147. Likewise, in *Quod omnis probus liber sit* 74–75 and *de vita contemplativa* 21–22, Philo includes Palestine-Syria and Egypt among the regions of *Barbaria*.

³⁸ Cohen (1978) 85–86; Wolski (1993) 111–17; Sommer (2005a) 160–65, 296–303; Fowler (2010).

³⁹ Kloppenborg (2000) 241–45; Kasher (1990) 231–32, 258.

⁴⁰ Josephus, *BJ* 2.266–69; Bennett (2007b) 49. *BJ* 1.413–15; *AJ* 15.339–41 describe the temples and statues.

⁴¹ Josephus, *AJ* 20.173; Raban (2009) 11–49 treat Strato's Tower.

polities “in a Greek manner” outside them.⁴² When this dispute concerning whether Caesarea’s civic terrain was “Greek” or “Jewish” triggered violence, the emperor Nero decreed that the Greeks ruled (*archein*) the city.⁴³

Josephus’ presentation of the “Syrians” of Caesarea as claiming to be “Greeks” reflects a significant trend in first-century Roman imperial Syria and greater Judea: the bringing of “many Greeces” to “*Barbaria*.” Amid conflicts between Greek and Jewish factions, the Greek *politeiai* of these regions, like the “*metropoleis*” and gymnasia that papyrus sources document for Roman Egypt, were extending citizenship to members of local ethnicities and integrating them into Greek civic life.⁴⁴ Josephus’ interchangeable use of “Greek” and “Syrian” to describe the Caesareans suggests that the Greek cities of Roman-era Syria had united diverse populations into a shared civic rubric. Since Greeks, Syrians, and other Near Eastern ethnics now exercised citizenship in the same institutional and performative framework, it was difficult to distinguish between Greek and Syrian factions.⁴⁵ Josephus’ account thereby coheres with socio-political trends that transformed diverse ethnics into Greek citizens. The Roman general Pompey had made ethnic Cilicians into “Greek” citizens of Pompeiopolis and had integrated local ethnics into the Greek polities of southern Syria and greater Judea that he restored amid Hasmonean collapse.⁴⁶ Herod I likewise established Caesarea, as well as Sebaste, by assembling varied ethnic inhabitants and veterans into a “Greek” civic system, which explains why Josephus later defined the Caesareans as Syrians who claimed to be Greek citizens.⁴⁷ Moreover, even if names never unambiguously indicate ethnic backgrounds or cultural traits, a weight from Caesarea Maritima (52 CE) intriguingly bears the name Amos (or Amous), son of Gaokosi(os?), and another from Caesarea Philippi (late first century CE) has the name Marinus. Their names suggest ethnic Idumaeans and Syrian (or “Arab”) origin respectively, but they were *agoranomoi* in Greek cities established by Herod I and Herod Philip.⁴⁸ Such weights could reflect mere naming patterns

⁴² Josephus, *AJ* 15.328–330; Andrade (2010) treats in detail.

⁴³ Nero’s edict was probably enacted in 61 CE. Schürer (1979) 2.117.

⁴⁴ Méléze-Modrzejewski (1983); especially (1985) discusses Greek citizen status in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt.

⁴⁵ Andrade (2010). Rajak (2001) 140–41 notes that Josephus could use the terms “Greek” and “Syrian” to distinguish between urban and rural populations. At the same time, Greek citizens living in Syria were nonetheless Syrians, since the term included all residents of Syria.

⁴⁶ Strabo, 8.8.5, 14.3.3; Josephus, *AJ* 13.395–97, 14.74–76, 87–88; *BJ* 1.155–57, 166.

⁴⁷ Josephus, *BJ* 1.408–15; *AJ* 15.331–41.

⁴⁸ Kushnir-Stein (1995) 48–50; (2008) 209–12 = *CIIP* 2.1727. Amos (or Amous) and Marinus have common “Semitic” roots, but Gaokosi(os) seems linked to the Edomite god Kos. Josephus, *AJ* 18.28; *BJ* 2.168 documents the foundation of Caesarea Philippi.

among Greeks, but as various ethnics joined Greek civic communities, they possibly created new “Greek” onomastic patterns.⁴⁹

While Josephus claimed that the “Syrians” of Caesarea deemed themselves “Greeks,” he posited otherwise for the Syrians of Seleucia on the Tigris, in Parthian territory. According to him, the vast Greek population of Seleucia revolted against king Artabanus III in the mid-30s CE, and their revolt assumed local dimensions as the city’s Greeks fought against “Syrians” of Babylonia who supported him.⁵⁰ Josephus’ use of “Syrian” here follows Seleucid patterns. As previously emphasized, Seleucid Greeks defined “Syrians” as an ethnicity descended from the ancient Assyrians or, as Josephus maintained, from ancient Arameans. The label perhaps homogenized what were assorted Aramaic-speaking ethnicities not possessing Greek citizenship. As first-century Parthian authority became increasingly unstable and the Greeks of Seleucia asserted autonomy, such Syrians even allied with Artabanus III against the Greeks.

The civic distinctions between the Greeks and Syrians at Seleucia dictated their collective interactions in ways strikingly different from those of Roman imperial Syria. Instead of integrating local Syrian or other ethnics into the city’s Greek *politeia* in ways that obscured ethnic or cultural differences, the Seleucians excluded them and thereby stimulated social commonality among them. These Syrians even formed alliances with other excluded ethnicities, such as Jews, to conduct their *stasis* against the Greeks. Josephus’ statements cohere with cuneiform documents describing fighting between Greek citizens and “Babylonians” in other contexts.⁵¹ In response, the Greeks courted Syrians’ favor and united with them to attack local Jews. Yet, even when ethnic Greeks and Syrians shared an enmity for Jews, they still belonged to different socio-political communities. This factionalism clarifies how the ethnic and social segments of Parthian Greek cities like Seleucia differed from those of Roman Syria’s Greek cities. Although

⁴⁹ Chapter 7 examines this issue at Dura-Europos.

⁵⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 18.371–79. According to Josephus, a group of “not a few Syrians” were *empoliteuomenon*, that is, they lived in the city but belonged to a separate *politeuma*. These “Syrians” in recent times had lived in nearly constant violence and civic discord, or *stasis*, with the Greeks, who were the majority population of the city. Tac., *Ann.* 6.42, 11.9 describes the conflict as between oligarchic and popular factions, but he seems to recast an ethnic conflict as factional violence between aristocratic and democratic groups that had typified classical Greek cities. For Seleucians identifying themselves as Greeks, *PAT* 0270 = *CIS* 2.3, 3924 = *IGLS* 17.1.24. For the gymnasium and athletics of Babylonia’s Greeks under the Parthians, *IGSK* 65.107, perhaps 78.

⁵¹ Josephus, *AJ* 18.375–77. Van der Spek (2009) 107–114 discusses ethnic violence between Greeks and Babylonians in Seleucid and Parthian Babylon. Likewise, in Ptolemaic Egypt, it was plausible for Egyptians to attempt to kill a recluse in the Serapeum of Memphis because he was an identifiable Greek. Wilcken (1927) no. 8.

Greeks and Syrians inhabited the same civic landscape at Seleucia, they operated in distinct civic organisms and symbolic fields that reaffirmed ethnic divisions between the categories “Greek” and “Syrian.” Such divisions were buttressed by lingering genealogical, cultural, and linguistic differences.

By contrast, in the cities of Roman Syria, ethnic Greeks and Syrians (not to mention Phoenicians and “Arabs”) increasingly participated in the same “Greek” citizen body and a shared symbolic system. This framework of signification transformed Greek and Syrian civic performances into intersecting principles. Josephus’ Caesareans accordingly were Syrians not merely by ethnicity; they were a Greek community of a broader Syrian *ethnos*, a social category. In fact, the governance of the Roman administration and Greek councils in Syria was based on the Greek *polis*’ ability to elide the differences between “Greek” and “Syrian” and make them into coterminous civic identifications, not merely distinct ethnic ones. Accordingly, the *Gospel of Mark* claims that near Tyre in Phoenicia, a woman who was a “Greek,” but “a Syro-Phoenician by birth (*genos*),” approached Jesus.⁵² This statement framed her as Syrian and Phoenician (or Syro-Phoenician) by provincial affiliation and perhaps ethnicity. Her “Greek” status, however, indicates that her family belonged to the Greek civic community of Tyre, whether she spoke Greek, Aramaic, or Phoenician.⁵³

Such descriptions demonstrate how the concepts of “Greek,” “Syrian,” and “Phoenician” had transformed amid the transition from Seleucid to Roman rule. Over a century earlier, the poet Meleager differentiated Greeks, Syrians, and Phoenicians according to linguistic characteristics marking distinct ethnic origins. Born at Gadara around 140 BCE and educated in Tyre, he eventually died in Cos. In an epitaphic epigram, he said “hello” to three different language groups. It read: if you are Syrian, *Salam*; if you are Phoenician, *Naidios*; if you are Greek, *Chaire*.⁵⁴ Intriguingly, Meleager’s epitaphic epigram did not merely map ethnicity by linguistic markers, but since he wrote his poem in Greek, he was perhaps anticipating a Greek-reading audience that defined Syrians and Phoenicians as descendants of Aramaic- and Phoenician-speakers. Accordingly, during the late Seleucid period, Meleager had posited that Greeks, Syrians, and

⁵² Mark 7:26. Her being a “Greek” distinguished her from Jews and residents of Syrian Phoenicia who were not Greek citizens.

⁵³ Goodman (1994) 172 interprets similarly. Matt 15:22 calls the woman a “Canaanite” (an archaizing reference to Phoenicians, or what Phoenician-speakers called themselves).

⁵⁴ *Anth. Pal.* 7.419.7–9. “Naidios” appears in manuscripts, but modern editors have sometimes substituted “Audonis,” a greeting used by Punic Carthaginians in Plaut., *Poen.* 3.22.

Phoenicians were ethnically distinguishable through ancestral languages even if they presently spoke Greek. But the *Gospel of Mark's* author indicated that Roman imperial subjects could be Greek by civic status and "Syro-Phoenician" by provincial affiliation, ethnicity, language, or cultural attributes.

This shift to "Syrian" as a social regional formulation did not suppress all veins of ethnic Syrianness. The Syrian ethnic articulations of Syrianness that characterized Seleucid times persisted through the Roman imperial period. The previously mentioned examples of Iamblichus and Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess* indicate this, and Strabo and Josephus posited ethnic continuity between Syrians and ancient Assyrians or Arameans. But the civic connotations of "Syrian" must be stressed. By the Roman period, "Syrian" reflected cognition of an *ethnos*, a regional social collectivity but not necessarily an "ethnicity" denoting shared genealogy. It described the Greek citizens and the non-citizen inhabitants (or "villagers") of the Roman province(s) of Syria, as well as certain residents of client principalities and greater Judea.⁵⁵ The terms Greek and Syrian therefore did not always bear specific ethnic, cultural, or linguistic meanings under the Romans, and citizens of Greek city-states in Syria and greater Judea were Greek and Syrian through civic criteria. Subsequent epigraphic evidence supports Josephus' perception that "Greek" and "Syrian" could represent intersecting concepts of civic performance in these regions.

It is therefore worth returning to Thaimos Ioulianos, with whom this chapter began. Around 200 CE, a Syrian named Avidios Agrippa inscribed Thaimos' epitaph in Greek and Latin. The Greek version emphasized that the deceased, Thaimos Ioulianos, son of Saados, was a *bouleutēs* and *politēs* of the Greek city of Canatha in Syria. The Latin called him a Syrian decurion.⁵⁶ Although Thaimos' genealogy is unknown, his funerary inscription located his Syrianness in his citizenship in one of the Syrian provinces' Greek cities. His civic affiliation therefore made him a Greek and a Syrian, whatever his ethnic background. It was in this vein that after Canatha was transferred to the province of Arabia (after c. 200 CE), its citizens called themselves "Arabs," a term that Greeks had used for settled inhabitants or nomads of various places that they called "Arabia."⁵⁷ On

⁵⁵ Strabo, 16.2 (esp. 1–3); Josephus, *AJ* 18.1–2; *AE* (1972) nos. 626, 628; *Dig.* 48.22.7.14–15, 50.15.1, 50.15.3 with Amm. Marc. 14.8.7–11 (plural "Syrias"). Also see Noy (2000) 318–21.

⁵⁶ *IGR* 1.25 = *IG* 14.2532 = *IGF* 141 (Gaul). Thaimos and Saados appear to be names of Arabic origin. Stark (1971) 117; Harding (1971) 141, 318; Negev (1991) 66–67; Sartre (2007b) 224.

⁵⁷ Residents of Arabia who conceived of themselves as Arabs were adopting a Roman-era civic conceptualization. The issue of "Arab" ethnicity is complicated, as Greeks used "Arab" for a diversity

the island of Thasos therefore, when a certain Ruphenos wrote an epitaph for his son Germanos, in it he called himself “an Arab of the venerable city Canatha.”⁵⁸ Because Ruphenos belonged to a polity of the Arabian province, he could claim to be Greek and Arab regardless of his putative lineage.

These epitaphs reflect an experience and cognition of “Greek” and “Syrian” as regionalized social and civic categories, not ethnic ones. Although neither epitaph explicitly stated that these men were Greeks, their status as citizens and councilors of a Greek city of Syria or Arabia encapsulated this claim. It is therefore significant that citizens of Nysa-Scythopolis, one of Canatha’s sister cities in the region of Coele Syria, framed their city and neighboring civic communities as Greek and Syrian. When they dedicated a statue to the emperor Marcus Aurelius, the “Nysians and Scythopolitans” noted on the base that they were one of “the Greek cities of Coele Syria,” their regional *koinon* (which included some cities of Arabia). The legends of Nysa-Scythopolis’ contemporary municipal coinage, which often featured ΕΠ or ΕΛ ΠΟΛ, also made this assertion.⁵⁹ Similarly, Nicholaus of Damascus, writing in the first century BCE, reckoned the Greek cities of Coele Syria and Judea to be *poleis Hellenides*.⁶⁰ In fact, as following chapters emphasize, these city-states interacted as part of a coherent peer polity network. They constituted a “commonwealth” or league of *poleis Hellenides* upon which the Syrian *ethnos*’ provincial organization, primary *koinon*, and regional *koina* were based (chapter 4). Such examples therefore indicate that the terms “Syrian” and “Arab” in the epitaphs just described framed Canathenes as citizens of a Greek city of the regional *ethnos* of Syria or Arabia even if these terms encapsulated other ethnic or cultural characteristics. By calling themselves “Syrian” and “Arab,” Canathenes were expressing what types of Greeks they were: Greeks not of classical cities.

The cultural attributes of Syrians, Phoenicians, or “Arabs,” who became Greek citizens were not always even Greek by classical standards. A certain inscription from Palmyra perhaps suggests as much. The inscription,

of peoples and regions characterized by varied lifestyles. This explains why a late first-century CE inscription is dedicated to “Atargatis of the Arabs” at Qalaat Faqra in Lebanon, where Ituraean “Arabs” lived. Rey-Coquais (1999) 639–40; Kropp (2009a) 112–17. This work uses “Arabs” not to index self-definition but the etic Greek/Roman conception. Hoyland (2001) 69–78; Macdonald (2001), (2003); Graf (2003); Gatier (2007) discuss “Arabs.”

⁵⁸ *IGR* 1.839 = *IG* 12.8.528. MacDonald (2009) 302–3 likewise stresses the civic connotation. The name Germanos, as noted in Sartre (2007b) 211, may be a cross-fertilization of the Latin Germanus and the Aramaic *grm*. MacAdam (1986) 53, 78 describes Canatha’s transferal to Arabia.

⁵⁹ Foerster and Tsafir (1986–87) 53–58: Nysa-Scythopolis as τῶν κατὰ Κοίλην Συρίαν Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων. Butcher (2003) 371 (with *IGLS* 21.2.23–24) discusses Coele Syria as *koinon*.

⁶⁰ *FGrH*, 90.136 (Stern (1974) no. 97). Constantine Porphyrogenitus preserves his account.

written in Palmyrenean Aramaic on a funeral sculpture, describes a deceased woman as a “Greek” (*ywnyt*). Because the Aramaic inscription records “Semitic” names for her and her father, it has been surmised that *ywnyt* connoted a cognomen or foreign origins.⁶¹ Yet, the simpler interpretation is that “Greek” identified a woman whose relatives were citizens of a Greek polity. This inscription therefore indicates that the Palmyrene civic community had integrated Near Eastern idioms into entirely new expressions of civic Greekness that flouted or innovated upon classical traditions. Many Syrian Greeks cultivated classical forms, but amid the local and regional expressions of Greekness that Syria produced, some did not.

Such evidence indicates that many Syrians conceived of themselves as Greek citizens. As such, they were members of Greek polities and their broader “commonwealth,” even if they did not cultivate Greek classical forms. They construed the labels Greek and Syrian to reflect membership within civic collectivities regardless of variations in their language, ethnic genealogy, or cultural markers. The transformation of the concepts “Greek” and “Syrian” undermined the ethnic rifts that had characterised socio-political organization under the Seleucids. Ethnic Syrians perhaps continued to value many of their ethnic genealogies, kinship ties, and cultural traditions, but if they became Greek citizens, their cities’ prevailing symbolic framework marked them as Greek and Syrian, stressed shared Greek cultural attributes, and even reconstituted what “Greek culture” was. Such Greek citizens were members of the Syrian *ethnos*, or a regional collective, that engendered cognition of social commonality. When Josephus used the terms “Greek” and “Syrian” to describe the Caesareans, he was thereby referencing their civic status as Greeks and Syrians, perhaps along with their Syrian ethnicity. During his lifetime, Josephus himself had navigated the distinct symbolic universes of Greeks, Syrians, and Jews, and his references to “Greek” cities in southern Syria and greater Judea have parallels in the region’s inscriptions and fragmentary literature.⁶² Josephus was therefore uniquely situated in the cultural spectrum to understand what “Greek” and “Syrian” could signify. His statements indicate that many Syrians of diverse ethnic and social affiliations, including those in the district/province of Judea, had cast themselves as Greek citizens and members of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*.

⁶¹ PAT 0907=CIS 2.3, 4546 (Pl. 53b for image). The name of the deceased’s father (*zbyd*) is perhaps of Arabic origin. Similarly, PAT 0908=CIS 2.3, 4547 describes a deceased woman as “Egyptian” (*msryt*). It could be a cognomen or an ethno-cultural or provincial label.

⁶² Josephus, *BJ* 2.97, 7.44–51, 7.364.

The formation of Greek civic communities and engagements with Jews

The integration of ethnic Syrians into Greek civic communities profoundly affected the interactions of civic Greeks and Jews during the first century CE and thereafter. As Syrians and other ethnics became civic Greeks and cultivated innovative expressions of Greekness, Jewish residents of Greek city-states encountered pressure to conform to this trend and suffered isolation if they refused. When Jews in general resisted, violence occurred. If Josephus is accurate, the first Jewish revolt's initial stages were characterized by fierce conflicts between Greeks and Jews in cities throughout southern Syria and greater Judea, including the Herodian foundations of Caesarea and Sebaste.⁶³ While such violence, like that of the first Jewish revolt, was perhaps triggered by key events, larger structural pressures embedded in the Roman imperial context stimulated overlapping local and regional conflicts, and these informed certain dimensions of the first Jewish revolt.⁶⁴ Jerusalem and its temple thereby became the epicenter of a "concentric" ripple of conflicts between Romans and Jewish insurgents, between Rome and Parthia, among Near Eastern ethnicities and kingdoms, and among Greek and Jewish factions in settlements of Syria and greater Judea.⁶⁵

As described previously, Herod I maintained autonomous governance over diverse ethno-cultural groups, but his dynasty's authority was not sufficiently stable to survive beyond a century later. At that point, the Jewish cult's unique traditions, the (mis)governance of weaker successors or Roman administrators, and increased expectations among Greeks and Romans that Jews conform to certain "transgressive" cultic practices offset the fragile stability that his charismatic authority and violence had maintained. Moreover, the Herodians, while sustained by Rome, had weak genealogical links to ancient Jewish kings or venerable priestly lines, and many Jews entertained the prospect of alternate "kings" or priests that could revive ancient traditions. Ethnic violence, internal factionalism, Messianic movements, and hostility toward the Jewish elite that Herod had established therefore gained momentum in Judea and perhaps dovetailed with

⁶³ Josephus, *BJ* 2.457–480; *Vit.* 25–27, 42. Josephus *BJ* 2.97, 7.364: as Greek cities. Freyne (2002); Andrade (2010) provide analysis. Seigne (1997) 999–1000; Hoffmann (2002) 109–111 note material evidence that the temples of Zeus at Gerasa and Gadara suffered destruction.

⁶⁴ Goodman (2007) attributes the Jewish revolt's outbreak to event-oriented lapses and conflicts, not enduring tensions and differences. Seth Schwartz (2009a) 63–64, by contrast, asserts that more profound "social, cultural, political, and economic factors . . . enabled contingencies to be effective."

⁶⁵ Curran (2007) 78–83. Useful starting points are Berlin and Overman (2002); Popović (2011).

rural unrest in Galilee.⁶⁶ Finally, Herodian rulers and Roman magistrates governed cities of southern Syria and Judea, such as Iamnia and Caesarea Maritima, in which civic Greeks and Jews debated whether their cities belonged to “the land of the Jews” or to Greeks of the Syrian *ethnos*. Because of such debates, a legacy of Hasmonean expansion and Roman intervention, Greeks and Jews of greater Judea and southern Syria fought to determine whether their cities would house pagan sanctuaries or statues that symbolized Greek pre-eminence.⁶⁷ The spate of violence between Greeks and Jews at the revolt’s outbreak, described above, can be linked to these factors. In Commagene, where provincial integration was less bloody, the apparent priestly status of Antiochus’ successors helped them consolidate a regional community. But Herod’s successors faced entrenched ethnic divisions and the antagonism of a separate and sometimes critical priestly hierarchy. After Herod I had populated it with lesser entities, this structure did not exercise hegemony over Jews, curtail dissenting movements, alleviate ethnic tensions, or exert cohesion. Some of its members promoted factionalism by maintaining critical positions toward putative innovations or transgressions of the Herodians and Roman governors.⁶⁸ In fact, the first Jewish revolt arose when a segment of the priesthood rebelled against Rome, but it failed to maintain unified insurgency. In addition to Jews who sympathized with Rome, numerous competing factions fought the Romans and one another.

Amid this backdrop, Josephus’ representation of how the Syrians of Caesarea defined their city as Greek amid Jewish efforts to control its civic terrain has bearing on the violence that erupted between Greek and Jewish factions. In the years approaching the first Jewish revolt, the ethnic Greeks and Syrians (and Phoenicians and “Arabs”) of the Greek *politeiai* of Syria and Judea had been forging shared identifications and affiliations through civic performance. But the unique cultic and ethno-cultural practices of Jews hampered such expressions of solidarity, and many Jews refrained

⁶⁶ Philo, *Leg.* 200–3; Josephus, *BJ* 2.1–16, 39–75, 117–18, 169–177, 184–203, 223–46, 254–308, 325–41, 405–56; *AJ* 17.206–223, 250–314, 18.55–62, 85–95, 116–19, 257–309, 19.300–11, 354–65, 20.1–6, 97–136, 160–215, 252–58; *Vit.* 31–41; Certain New Testament *Gospels* and *Acts of the Apostles*; Nicholas of Damascus, *FGrH*, 90.136 (Stern (1974) no. 97), via Constantine Porphyrogenitus), variously document the factors just described. Seth Schwartz (2001) 87–98: Messianic movements; Goodman (1987): failure of the ruling class; Brunt (1990) 328–51: religious anxieties and Roman misgovernance; Bennett (2007a) 328–51, Lichtenberger (2009), Kropp (2009a): imperial cult and figurative art; Horsley (2002) 87–88, 92–102, Seth Schwartz (1994), Jensen (2012): peasant displacement and banditry in Galilee (or lack thereof); Wilker (2007) 377–92: hostility toward the Herodians.

⁶⁷ Andrade (2010); Josephus, *AJ* 19.300–11, 20.1–5, 173–78; *BJ* 2.266–69; Philo, *Leg.* 188, 200–3 describe some disputes between Greeks and Jews before the revolt’s outbreak.

⁶⁸ Wilker (2007) 290–318 provides analysis.

from cultivating certain civic and cultic practices of Syria's Greek peer polity network, which included imperial cult worship. The increased integration of diverse ethnic constituents into Greek communities isolated Jews who refused to worship civic divinities, even if they had otherwise acculturated.⁶⁹ This rift incited anxieties within Greek civic bodies concerning the status of Jews and control over civic terrains, especially (but not exclusively) in regions of southern Syria and greater Judea that certain Jews believed to constitute Jewish soil. The Syrians of Caesarea therefore told their Jewish rivals, as previously noted, that the Herodians' patronage of temples and statues in their city marked it as "Greek."⁷⁰ When the first Jewish revolt erupted, Greeks and Jews in numerous cities of Judea and Syria fought each other, and Roman authorities exploited such phenomena. After Titus sacked Jerusalem in 70 CE, he "funded expensive spectacles and used Jewish captives as a display of their own destruction" throughout the Greek cities of southern Syria and greater Judea.⁷¹ Such spectacles promoted solidarity among Greek civic audiences whose ethnic and cultural constituents were increasingly heterogeneous, and they marginalized Jews who putatively threatened the cohesion of Greek civic topographies housing temples and figurative images. They also prompted Greeks to deem Romans their protectors from Jewish insurgency.⁷²

Similar socio-political mechanisms worked in Antioch, in north Syria. Like the Jews of Caesarea, the Jews of Antioch exercised *isopoliteia* or *isotimia*.⁷³ Through this status, Jews asserted the same civic privileges as Greek Antiochenes, but they belonged to a distinct Jewish civic community in ways that enabled them to avoid potentially idolatrous Greek civic-cultic activity. Yet, as Greek civic bodies in Syria integrated diverse ethnics, they pressured ethnic Jews to engage in Greek civic-cultic performances. Those who did so cultivated "Greek" and "Syrian" civic identifications and group

⁶⁹ Jews from such communities could use various combinations of Greek, Aramaic, or Hebrew for public display, including city names, as ossuaries from Jerusalem show. See *CIIP* 1.98 (Alexandrian); 304 (Apamene); 410–12 (Skythopoleitēs/*hbsny*); 427 (Chalcidean). *IJOr.* 3 contains Jewish inscriptions of broader Syria.

⁷⁰ Josephus, *BJ* 2.266–69.

⁷¹ Josephus, *BJ* 7.96. Josephus lists the Greek cities and Roman colonies where combats were staged. Captives were thrown to the beasts or had to fight each other as *gregarii* in Caesarea Philippi (7.23). Titus celebrated the birthdays of Domitian and Vespasian with similar contests at Caesarea Maritima (7.37) and the Roman colony of Berytus (7.39).

⁷² Josephus, *BJ* 3.409–11 describes how the Greek Caesareans celebrated as Vespasian returned from his successes in Galilee.

⁷³ The Jews at Antioch perhaps could participate in the assembly and exercise the same civic rights as Greeks, but they were not members of the same *politeuma* as the Greeks. Josephus, *AJ* 12.119; *Ap.* 2.39 describes the *isopoliteia* of Jewish Antiochenes.

affiliations alongside their Jewish ethnic relationships. Those who refused were marked as outsiders.

In fact, such pressures stimulated tensions in Antioch directly before and after the Romans destroyed the Jewish temple at Jerusalem. Amid the civil wars of 69, a Jew named Antiochus, as Josephus claims, addressed the Antiochenes who had assembled in the theater and accused his fellow Jews of planning to burn the city. He also argued that the Jews should be forced to participate in Greek civic-cultic customs. Violence ensued. Shortly thereafter a fire ravaged the “tetragonal” agora and surrounding buildings, thereby inflaming further suspicions and violence against local Jews.⁷⁴ Antiochus was endeavoring to force Jews to worship Antioch’s patron divinities exactly when the Greek civic bodies of Syria were incorporating members of Near Eastern ethnicities, including Jews. Antiochus, an ethnic Jew who worshipped the gods of Antiochenes Greeks, in fact exemplified “Greek” and “Syrian” civic-cultic performance. By assembling in the theater to debate political matters, the Antiochene citizens of diverse cultural and ethnic origins were therefore performing their civic Greekness, and this performance reaffirmed a shared perception of what constituted their Greek community. Yet, Antiochus’ conduct also stimulated hostility against the Jews who did not conform to civic Greekness’ normative demands. An inscription from Miletus and Antiochus’ own presence at the assembly in Antioch suggest that the Jews of Antioch who exercised *isopoliteia* would have assembled in their own section of the theater. This spatial arrangement, which placed them in the assembly but separated them from Greeks, would have located them at the Greek civic community’s margins.⁷⁵ The members of Antioch’s Jewish *politeuma* were not total outsiders. They exercised similar civic privileges, attended the assembly, and networked with civic Greeks. Yet, the increased expectation among Greek citizens that those who shared their privileges would engage in the same civic-cultic performances stimulated and exacerbated social fissures.

Accordingly, it is important to stress that certain Jews, such as Antiochus, were integrated into Greek civic bodies, and many Jews undoubtedly spoke Greek, cultivated cosmopolitan Greek forms, and interacted amicably with Greeks.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, many Jews, despite being conversant in Greek idioms, still possessed an internal sense of group membership that separated them from the city’s Greeks, did not worship civic or imperial deities, and avoided contact with figural images. In certain cities of Judea and southern Syria, Greek citizens and Jews heatedly debated who

⁷⁴ Josephus, *BJ* 7.43–62.

⁷⁵ *SEG* 4.441 (Miletus).

⁷⁶ Geiger (2009b) discusses.

held sovereignty within and authority over their civic landscape. In fact, the outbursts of violence that erupted between Greek and Jewish factions in the Herodian dynasts' territories often targeted altars, figurative art, or Jewish prayer-houses because of their potency as markers of "Greek" or "Jewish" terrains. Many Antiochenes likewise regarded the refusal of Jews to sacrifice to divinities that protected Antioch's Greek civic life to be threatening, especially since Greeks and Jews of southern Syrian cities had recently been embroiled in violence. Accordingly, when Titus initially reached Antioch after capturing Jerusalem and marching victoriously through Syria, a crowd petitioned that he expel the Jews, but when Titus subsequently appeared before the Antiochenes in the theater, he refused to do so. The Antiochenes then petitioned that the Jewish *politeuma's* privileges be erased from the brazen tablets erected in their theater, and Titus again refused.⁷⁷

Despite denying the Antiochenes' requests, Titus interacted with them in ways that promoted cohesion within the Greek citizen community and reaffirmed the Roman administration's importance as the patron of Greek civic life. Such interactions included laudatory acclamations upon his entering the city and during the assembly in the theater. These theatrics at Antioch cohered with a general trend. Since the inception of Roman intervention, Greek cities in the Near East had tried to make Jews practice full citizenship within a Greek *politeia* by having them worship civic divinities or be deprived of civic privileges. For this reason, Julius Caesar, if Josephus can be trusted, had previously sent an edict to Sidon, Tyre, and Ascalon stipulating that Jews govern themselves according to their traditional customs. He also mandated that his decree be inscribed on bronze and placed in the public archives. Caesar had enacted such laws to prevent civic Greeks of Sidon, Tyre, and Ascalon from expelling local Jews or making them participate in their civic-cultic customs. Such tensions extended beyond Syria. During the 20s BCE, the civic Greeks of several Ionian cities claimed that Jews should be deprived of their civic rights unless they adopted the "Greek" gods of the city, but the magistrate Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, swayed by Nicolaus of Damascus, protected Jewish privileges.⁷⁸ According to Josephus, in Alexandria the sophist Apion argued that Jews should not exercise the same civic privileges as Greek Alexandrians unless worshipping their gods.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Josephus, *BJ* 7.100–11; *AJ* 12.122–24.

⁷⁸ Josephus, *AJ* 12.125–26, 14.190–98, 16.27–60. Pucci ben Zeev (1998) 381–87; Eilers (2003b) explore (in)accuracies in Josephus' epigraphic dossiers. Gruen (2002) 131–32 analyzes the conflicts' episodic nature; Jews did not suffer relentless "persecution."

⁷⁹ Josephus, *Ap.* 2.65.

Likewise, amid the violence of the first Jewish revolt and among Greeks and Jews in southern Syria and Judea, the civic Greeks of Syria especially intensified their efforts to make Jews worship civic divinities, deprive them of civic privileges, or attack them. By focusing on the marginality of dissident Jews, the ethnically and culturally heterogeneous Greek civic communities of Syria engendered perceptions and experiences of commonality and sameness. The efforts of Antioch's assembly to expel Jews or force them to participate in Greek civic-cultic rituals enabled Greek citizens to define their civic community in inclusive terms while isolating Jews inhabiting its margins. By doing so, they reaffirmed common civic identifications and affiliations among the city's diverse citizen population in ways that transformed the antagonistic ethnic categories of "Greek" and "Syrian" into intersecting civic labels.

The early works of Jews who venerated Jesus further document this trend. In the late first century CE or so, the *Acts of the Apostles* described how many disciples of Christ at Antioch in the 50s preached primarily to the Jews, but some preached to *Hellenistai*.⁸⁰ Whether or not this is actually true, the author of this account was not merely describing ethnic Greeks, but he was referring to the Greek civic community of Antioch. Previously, Greek-speakers had described Jews who adopted Greek customs as "Hellenizing," but in this case *Hellenistai* encompassed ethnic Greeks and Syrians who were members of a Greek civic community. The term's meaning was therefore shaped by social processes that enabled ethnic Syrians to "become Greek" by practicing citizenship in a Greek *politeia*. The author, hesitating to call them *Hellēnes* because of their heterogeneous ethnic and cultural backgrounds, used it to emphasize that they had assumed Greek civic performances. No longer divided discretely between ethnic Greeks and Syrians, Antioch was inhabited by *Hellenistai* and Jews, and early devotees of Jesus Christ preached to both.⁸¹ This passage from *Acts* also suggests why some Antiochene Greeks were hostile to Jews in the Jewish revolt's wake. Even as the Jew Antiochus maintained that his fellow Judeans should worship Greek civic divinities, certain Jewish elements were dissuading civic Greeks from such worship by preaching conversion to an ascending Jewish sect.

All told, civic Greeks and Jews of Syria and greater Judea often maintained overlapping networks and certain points of cultural commonality,

⁸⁰ Acts 11:20; Peterson (2009) 231. Jews in Antioch had attracted Greeks to their communities. Josephus, *BJ* 7.45.

⁸¹ Acts 11:26. The author reports that disciples of Christ, whether Jews or *Hellenistai*, first adopted the name "Christian" at Antioch.

but even Jews who admired Greek culture could pit themselves against Greeks. Social rifts arose between Greeks and Jews during the first century CE as competing factions sought to mark and control “Greek” or “Jewish” civic landscapes or as Greek civic communities of the Syrian *ethnos* demanded the full integration of Jews. This trend intersected with and helped shape the broader regional Jewish revolt against Rome. Indeed, despite his intimate connections to Greek culture and to Greeks and Romans, Josephus’ literary persona was foremost that of a Jew defending his involvement in the insurgency. One of his chief rivals, being conversant in Greek culture, had likewise led Jews of Tiberias to attack the Syrian Greeks of Gadara, Hippos, and Scythopolis.⁸² Social fissures between Greeks and Jews had incited even Jews of such cultural heterogeneity to violence.

Conclusion

The formation of the Syrian *ethnos* as a cognitively experienced regional collective defined in civic terms facilitated diverse configurations of idioms through which Syrianness, or Syrian social identification and membership in the *ethnos*, could be expressed. It intersected with the diverse ethnic categories and linguistic groups encapsulated by Iamblichus’ “autochthony,” and as Lucian’s *On the Syrian Goddess* celebrates, it even facilitated transformations in ethnic or indigenous Syrianness, which interwove Greek narratives and symbols. But the rise of “Syrian” as a regional social identification shaped by Roman imperialism, structured by Greek peer-polity networking, and integrating Greek idioms above all highlights the mutability of cultural framing and articulation. It is possible to describe how such Syrians meaningfully expressed Syrian cultures, if not Syrian culture. And instead of ambiguously referencing hybridity, creolization, and terms that similarly index the amorphous space between immutable binary traditions, one can discuss the reconstitution of Greekness and Syrianness as intersecting categories that shared many of the same polyvalent symbols. Thaimos Ioulianos, the son of Saados and a Syrian councilor of a Greek polity, occupied the vibrant nexus where shifting categorizations of Greekness and Syrianness, of ethnicity and citizenship, of social affiliation and cultural signification met.

The consolidation of Roman authority in the Near East was predicated upon the Roman administration’s stabilization of local Greek elites who

⁸² Josephus, *Vit.* 36–42, 349–50 (on Justus); *BJ* 2–3. Josephus assumed varied personae but dichotomized between “us” Jews and “them.” Rajak (2001) 139, 142–44; Gleason (2001) 62.

integrated Near Eastern ethnics into Greek civic communities. These communities expressed innovative forms of Greekness. As elites of Greek polities governed in collaboration with Roman officials, client kings became obsolete. As noted previously, in Commagene the royal family had so stabilized Greek city-states that Roman authorities could empower local councils to govern directly. In Judea, the Herodians patronized Greek polities as well. Because violence between Greeks and Jews contributed to the first Jewish revolt's regional dimensions, Judea's integration into the Roman provincial system was indeed turbulent. But after the revolt, the territories of greater Judea and southern Syria were more firmly embedded in the Roman provinces of Syria and Judea, even if Agrippa II maintained territory some decades thereafter.⁸³ Despite the complexities of Jewish life which cannot be treated in detail here, it can be stated briefly that certain inhabitants of the province of Judea, including those of the Herodian foundations of Caesarea Maritima (which now housed a notable Roman *colonia*) and Sebaste, conceived of themselves as civic Greeks and members of the Syrian *ethnos*. Likewise traditional Jewish cities increasingly assumed Greek civic alignments and, to some extent, integrated Jews into Greek civic life under Roman supervision. Still, various forms of Jewish practice, ethno-cultural tension, and contestation of this process still persisted, as represented by the emphasis of 2 Baruch and 4 Ezra on maintaining the Torah and the covenant.⁸⁴ Hadrian accordingly reconstituted the province of Judea as Syria Palestina (c. 135 CE) after suppressing a second major Jewish insurgency. But all told, the provinces of Syria and Judea (later Syria Palestina) were, over the late first and second centuries, structured by a network of Greek city-states. These were ethnically and culturally diverse and supplemented by Roman *coloniae*. This period therefore marked the ascendancy of Greek city-states and their innovative, eclectic expressions of Greekness in Roman imperial Syria.

In Judea and Syria, the Jews, with their unique scriptural tradition, their "ancestral laws," and their veneration of the Jewish temple of Jerusalem, were perhaps the foremost victims of Greek city-states' integrative features. Amid the incorporation of ethnic Syrians, Phoenicians, "Arabs," and "deviant" Jews into Greek (and Syrian) citizen bodies, dissident Jews increasingly became a focus for hostility in local communities. When Roman legions destroyed the Jewish temple in 70 CE, their violence was the regional manifestation of such local tensions. These tensions had incited

⁸³ Millar (1993a) 77, 91–92; Sartre (2001a) 507–15.

⁸⁴ This phase is poorly documented. Seth Schwartz (2001) 129–61, (2006), esp. 29–33, 45–47 (nn. 76–77), clarifies it, provides sources, and contextualizes rabbinic movements.

atrocities among Greeks and Jews, and they had also contributed to confrontation between Jews and Roman authorities. When this spate of local violence and confrontations reached the level of regional revolt, Roman legions sacked Jerusalem and ravaged the Jewish temple, thereby destroying a symbol of Jewish self-perception and community that had hindered integration into Roman imperial and Greek civic structures.⁸⁵ Similar antagonisms in the province of Judea stimulated the Bar Kochba revolt of 132–35, but it failed, and the temple remained in ruins. If Herod had intended his sanctuary in Jerusalem to mark his legacy, his expectations were frustrated. Instead, his contributions to Caesarea's temple to Augustus and Rome and perhaps to Athens' temple of Zeus Olympius were more enduring.

Yet, amid such social tensions, violence, and cultural destruction, the production of "Greek" and "Syrian" as intersecting modes of civic performance for the next two centuries constituted the basis for social cohesion in Roman Syria. As local dynasts produced more Greek polities, and as Greek polities integrated ethnic Syrians, a dense and coherent network of peer polities formed. As this happened, the Roman administration and its agents governed Syria, Judea, and adjacent territories through their negotiations with civic councils (*boulai*), not client kings. The councils' increased numbers, resources, and ethnic components had made the intermediary roles of client kings obsolete. This process helped trigger civic violence, rebellion, imperial oppression, and destruction in Judea, but elsewhere it provided a foundation for imperial governance and new expressions of civic Greekness that integrated local idioms. It enabled Thaimos Ioulianos, son of Saados, to be a Syrian civic councilor of a *polis Hellēnis*. It enabled Iamblichus to fashion himself as an Aramaic-speaking ethnic Syrian while sharing civic Syrianness with Greek-speaking ones. As chapter 10 stresses, it enabled Lucian's Hierapolis to interweave Greek and Near Eastern idioms into new expressions of (As)Syrian ethnicity, indigeneity, and culture while still maintaining a Greek civic order. The following chapters in Part II examine how the Roman administration and civic councils facilitated these trends.

⁸⁵ Rives (2005).

The Syrian ethnos' Greek cities
Dispositions and hegemonies (first to third centuries CE)

In 199 CE, the civic council of Palmyra honored Ogelos, son of Makkaios ('*gylw br mqy*) with a statue documented by a bilingual inscription, just outside the agora. According to the inscription, these monuments commemorated his protection of caravans, campaigns against nomads, and service as synodiarch (leader of caravans). Both the Greek and Palmyrenean Aramaic versions of the inscription concluded by stating that Ogelos had "performed his entire *politeia*" (rendered *poleitia* and *plṭy*) in a distinguished and glorious way.¹

The inscription and statue that honored Ogelos flouted "pure" imperial Greek or Near Eastern paradigms. The praising of civic euergetes with statues and inscriptions typified contemporary Greek polities of the eastern Roman empire. The inscription's emphasis on Ogelos' performance of *politeia*, in Greek and Aramaic, accordingly coheres with the citizen ideologies that typify Roman imperial Greek *poleis*. So does the fact that civic authorities governing a community of Aramaic-speakers had honored Ogelos in Greek, along with Aramaic. Yet, Ogelos' cultural traits and his citizen acts are noticeably embedded in a Near Eastern context. His links to the caravan trade, interactions (whether hostile or mediating) with nomads, and Arabic name are among these. Additionally, Ogelos most likely discharged many of the exemplary citizen behaviors that the inscription celebrates while conversing in Aramaic and donning "Parthian" caravan apparel. In short, within the civic framework of Palmyra, Ogelos' distinctly Near Eastern or local modes of behavior were acts of Greek *politeia*, and Greek citizenship had been framed as inclusive of Aramaic speech, Near Eastern social networking, and Palmyra's unique local culture.

Ogelos' complex civic honors have substantial bearing on scholarly explorations of Roman provincial societies. In such studies, the term

¹ *PAT* 1378=*Inv.* 10.44=*IP* 16=*Agora* VI.18=*IGLS* 17.1.222. Aramaic omits "entire." Compare *PAT* 2769=*IGLS* 17.1.149 (*politeuma*).

“Romanization” and its Greek sibling “Hellenization” have endured increased critique and modification. Unless otherwise qualified, these only map a uniform dissemination of idioms from putative imperial or cultural centers (Italy/Greece) to peripheries (provinces). They do not explain variation in provincial societies, differing levels of “assimilation,” or how provincials sculpted their own cultures. More nuanced approaches, methods, and terms address how provincials “translated” idioms into new symbolic contexts or performed for both imperial and local audiences. The introduction has discussed them, but a brief, general reminder is merited here. Some scholars have analyzed how imperial subjects of Italy and the provinces produced *bricolage* by rendering dynamic significance to old idioms as they combined them with newly introduced ones in contemporary contexts. Others have examined how provincials participated in hybridity, creolization, or the Middle Ground by interweaving idioms of diverse cultural origins. In such ways, scholars have examined how provincials critically shaped their local/regional cultures and their own positioning within the empire while negotiating diverse social and ethnic traditions.

As discussed previously, such formulations capture the complexities of provincial cultures and their composition under Roman imperialism. They illuminate how provincials shifted between “Greater” and “Lesser” traditions for various contexts or negotiated the encounter of these traditions in ways that produced new cultural forms. Their shortcoming, however, is that they often render Greek or Roman culture and various “native” or Near Eastern traditions as stable binaries, and they occlude how provincial engagements destabilized, transformed, and reconstituted these binary traditions and experiences of them. They overlook the possibility that “native” idioms expressed Greekness and Romanness, thereby becoming Greek or Roman culture in local contexts. It is therefore worth considering other concepts and terms with which Roman imperial historians have examined provincial societies. Some have delineated how imperial subjects could fashion multiple modes of presentation for varied audiences and produce Roman provincial cultures amalgamated from “pre-Roman” and Roman forms. Provincials in the Roman empire therefore participated in a “cultural system structured by systematic differences,” with the implication that they were Roman in different ways.² Others have emphasized the varying practical and cognitive positions that imperial subjects fashioned in relation to the empire. Provincials, soldiers, and

² Woolf (1998) especially 7–23, 238–49 (242 quoted).

frontier inhabitants from diverse regions crafted “discrepant experiences” as they responded to imperial pressures and exerted agency amid broader structuration.³

As this chapter suggests, such understandings of the Roman empire as stimulating discrepant but intersecting experiences amid broader structuration elucidate provincials’ engagements with Greekness and Romanness, or how they performed Greek or Roman culture.⁴ Scholarly treatments of *bricolage*, hybridity, creolization and the like often accompany formulations of systematic difference, and they describe processes of cultural interweaving that produce new symbolic worlds or movement between different cultural universes. But what must be stressed is how cultural interweaving or boundary crossing informed discrepant experiences or systematic differences of Greek and Roman cultural expression. They facilitated provincials’ treatment of “native” idioms as Greek or Roman culture. In this vein, this chapter examines how Greek *poleis* of Roman imperial Syria constituted performative and discursive frameworks that endowed idioms with meanings. It argues that their structuring principles fashioned Greekness and Syrianness, the imperial and local, and the civic and ethnic as mutually informing and oftentimes intersecting categories. It theorizes how *poleis*, as individual units, as nodes within networks of peer polities or “commonwealths,” and as vectors connecting urban centers and hinterlands, shaped certain discrepant experiences of Roman imperial subjecthood and, with them, of Greekness and Romanness. The *polis*’ multi-faceted structuring of provincial space and cultural practice, which was in certain ways replicated or reconfigured by larger villages or imperial estates, stabilized provincial solidarities and imperial integration.

The previous chapter has examined how Greek city-states incorporated members of Near Eastern ethnicities into their citizen ranks during the Roman imperial period. It also has explored how local dynasts facilitated this process. Their expansion of Greek civic networks, which integrated ethnic Syrians, enabled Roman magistrates and Greek civic authorities to enact local and regional governance. Various inscriptions, monumental formations, survey data, and the perspectives of Dio of Prusa regarding citizen performance help qualify the material and ideological implications of such transitions in Greek citizenship. It is through such evidence that this chapter theorizes how Roman imperialism facilitated the consolidation of a Syrian province organized into a network of Greek city-states, governed

³ Mattingly (1997a) 3–15, (2006) 15–18, (2011) 29–31; Barrett (1997) 59–63.

⁴ Revell (2009) treats architecture and Romanness in the western empire.

by Roman magistrates, and characterized by diverse and innovative expressions of Greekness. As it maintains, the Roman imperial administration stabilized networks of Greek city-states and thereby integrated the Near East's client kingdoms into the Syrian province(s). The varying chapters of Part II feature empirically grounded explorations of Antioch, Apamea, Gerasa, Palmyra, and Dura-Europos that show this process at work in specific settlements. But first this chapter presents the theoretical framework for it.

Two features of Syria's Greek civic communities receive emphasis. First, the activities of Greek civic elites primarily sustained and replicated the Greek communities and peer polity network upon which Roman imperialism depended. By exploiting diverse cultural idioms and favorable material conditions, they consolidated authority, generated solidarity within citizen bodies, and thereby facilitated Roman imperial governance of cohesive networks of Greek polities. As the Roman administration replaced client dynasts with governors of senatorial or equestrian rank, it also established or expanded the authority of civic councils in Greek city-states, which integrated diverse ethnic components. Roman governors and civic councils collaborated to perform the governing tasks that royal clients had previously undertaken. Accordingly, the Roman administration maintained imperial cohesion by both overseeing and empowering Greek civic councils and by extending citizenship and council membership to local ethnics. Councils in turn stimulated the production of innovative Greek performances and discrepant experiences of Greekness.

Second, Rome's stabilization of Greek civic councils, which increasingly integrated Near Eastern ethnics, created frameworks of signification through which the experience of citizen solidarity, social hierarchy, and Greekness were produced. These expressions of Greekness engaged classical traditions, but as they integrated Near Eastern idioms, they did not statically conform to classical models. Syrian expressions of civic Greekness were diverse and innovative, for the Greek *polis* structured how Syrians interwove imperial and local traditions to create discrepant forms of Greek cultural expression. Whether scholars analyze provincial cultures through *bricolage*, creolization, hybridity, or Middle Ground, or boundary crossing, they should also recognize how the binary traditions subjected to these processes were themselves transformed. Greek and Roman culture(s), like those of Near Eastern societies, were never quite the same, unitary, singular, or universal after provincial engagement. In the Roman Near East, the *polis* provided the framework for their reconstitution.

Greek politics and the Syrian *ethnos*

The integration of ethnic Greeks and Syrians into Greek city-states and a social *ethnos*, or a cognitively experienced regional collectivity, of Syrians entailed extensive socio-political transformation. During Roman intervention's initial stages, the imperial administration governed many parts of Syria through client kings. Throughout directly and indirectly controlled regions, Roman imperial administrators and client kings prompted Greek cities to extend citizenship to members of diverse ethnicities, and they often established Greek civic foundations in which ethnic Syrians, Phoenicians, or "Arabs" were enrolled as citizens.⁵ Yet, these were not the only innovations that Rome introduced. The Roman administration typically recognized as Greek *poleis* the cities that assembled their elite landowners into a *boulē* resembling the Roman Senate, thereby empowering them politically and expanding their ability to accrue resources.⁶ Aristocracies with a conscious sense of internal cohesion thereby ruled over Greek communities.

These *boulai* maintained a network of Greek city-states in the Syrian province that Rome created. Roman administrators not only interacted with civic councils of individual cities, but Greek councilors also served as representatives of the *koina* (communities) of which their Syrian *ethnos* was comprised. In this context, the term *koinon* could denote the Syrian *ethnos*' "commonwealth" of Greek city-states or its regional subunits.⁷ Although geographically mutable and not conforming exactly to provincial boundaries, these regional *koina* had been formed by Trajan's reign, and the Roman imperial administration determined the geographical units and political boundaries defining them.⁸ Bound by common civic-cultic festivals, games, and imperial cult worship, they provided institutional and conceptual frameworks for how citizens of different Greek civic communities interacted.⁹ In such ways, Roman governance prompted solidarity

⁵ Gotter (2001) 305–14. In Cilicia, Rome reoriented temple communities as Greek city-states in certain regions that were "central" for maintaining the imperial system.

⁶ Bang (2008) 106–22 is instructive.

⁷ Butcher (2003) 370–71. As Butcher (2004) 13 indicates, the collectivity called a *koinon* could reference all cities of the Syrian *ethnos* or subdivisions centered on various *metropoleis*.

⁸ By Trajan's reign, the Syrian *ethnos* constituted a province (*eparcheia*) of four *koina*, and each *koina* produced imperial priests. *ILS* 8819, 8819a; Welles (1938) no. 53. Gebhardt (2002) 305–10; Bru (2011) 274–80 explore the Syrian *koinon*, *eparcheia*, and regional *koina*. Ando (2000) 62, (2010) 31–40 describes how Roman *koina* offset previous political and ethnic collectives. *IGR* 3.1375=Welles (1938) no. 188 may describe a *Phoineikarch* from Gerasa. *IGLS* 21.2, 23–24: Coele Syria/Arabia.

⁹ Moretti (1953) nos. 62, 67 documents the games of the *koinon* of Syria, Phoenicia, and Cilicia. Bru (2011) 225–72 thoroughly discusses Greek and Roman games. Sometimes neighboring cities shared

within civic communities and within a network of peer Greek city-states that constituted the core structuring principle of the Syrian *ethnos*, its primary *koinon*, and its regional *koina*. By the reign of Trajan, this *ethnos* incorporated the inhabitants of Syria, Phoenicia, and Commagene and incrementally integrated those of Judea, whose unique context raised persisting tensions and ambiguities even after Hadrian violently embedded it in the Syrian *ethnos* as Syria Palestina. Under Septimius Severus, the Syrian *ethnos* integrated the districts or provinces then called Osrhoene and Mesopotamia.¹⁰ In other words, the Syrian *ethnos* that Trajan governed (excluding Judea) constituted a province (*eparcheia*), its provincial *koinon*, and its regional *koina* (also confusingly called *eparcheiai*). But even as subsequent Roman emperors in accretion reorganized the *ethnos* into numerous smaller provinces (*eparcheiai* or, again confusingly, *ethnē*), the cognition and experience of a Syrian *ethnos* and its *koinon* of peer Greek polities persisted into the third century, even if actual assemblies and games occurred only at the level of individual provinces or the regional *koina*.¹¹

The primary and regional *koina* of the Syrian *ethnos* bolstered peer polity interaction among its Greek cities and those of the eastern empire. A third-century inscription documenting the athletic career of Aurelios Septimios Eirenaïos, from Laodicea, demonstrates this. Although he won Greek games of Italy and Greece, he won most victories in games staged by cities in the provinces of Coele Syria, Syria Phoenice, Cilicia, and Cappadocia.¹² Likewise, during the second century, the imperial association of actors honored a certain Apamene named Julius Paris, a tragic actor who had conducted performances and thereby earned citizenship within numerous cities of Syria and Phoenicia, including Antioch and the Roman colony of Berytus.¹³ In such ways, Roman governance promoted

coin issues. Augé (2002); Butcher (2002), (2004) 249–51, (2007) 277–85. Sartre (2001b); Kropp (2009a); Bru (2011) 83–121 illuminate imperial cult worship in Syria and Arabia. Welles (1938) nos. 192–94: games of Arabia.

¹⁰ Strabo, 16.2.2 indicates that the Roman-era Syrian *ethnos* included inhabitants of Syria (Seleucis), Coele Syria, Phoenicia, Commagene, and Judea. Aside from Commagene, Judea, and diverse client principalities, these were generally integrated into the province that Pompey and immediately subsequent governors maintained. Rey-Coquais (1978) discusses provincial shifts.

¹¹ The third-century references of *AE* (1972) nos. 626, 628 to “the *ethnos* of the Syrians” could describe all Syrian provinces or just one. In fact, *Dig.* 48.22.7.14–15, 50.15.1, 50.15.3 with *Amm. Marc.* 14.8.7–11, and Noy (2008) 318–21, document plural “Syrias,” and a papyrus of 264 CE locates Bostra, in “Syria” (not Arabia). Sartre (1982) 77–79. *IGR* 1.25=*IG* 14.2532=*IGF* 141 places “Septimian” Canatha simply in “Syria;” *Ath.*, 3.100 (126a–f) treats an Ulpian (from Phoenicia) as “Syro-Atticist.” Theoderet, *Quest. In Iud.* 19.5–9 in Marcos and Sáenz-Badillos (1979); John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 25: 527–29; 49: 694; 50: 154–55 in Brooks (1923–25) in composite map Syrian regions.

¹² *IGR* 3.1012, from Laodicea. Moretti (1953) no. 72: additional games (including Syria Palestina).

¹³ Rey-Coquais (1973) 48, lines 8–10.

solidarity within civic communities and among them. It made interaction and competition among citizens of different Greek *politeiai* defining features of their civic Greekness, and it helped consolidate the Syrian provinces' Greek *poleis*. Even as Syrian cities competed with other communities from various provincial and regional *koina* for prestige and honors from the imperial administration, this competition integrated such cities into Syria's regional peer polity network.

The imperial administration generated an ideological system and inter-subjective lifeworld that oriented provincials, and their loyalties, toward the same epicenter.¹⁴ In provinces, Roman administrators exerted supreme governing authority. But the imperial administration did not work alone. Greek citizen communities, their peer polity network, and their membership in a primary *koinon* and its regional *koina* helped embed Syrians in a Roman imperial framework. To ensure the stability of regional *koina*, the Roman administration oversaw and patronized the local institutions of the *boulē*. Together, these entities enforced both Roman and local laws and extracted tribute from peasants' agrarian surplus, even if Roman magistrates could overturn the decisions of subordinate councilmen or intervene on appeal.¹⁵ In this sense, members of the council collaborated with Roman administrators to govern cities and to integrate symbols of Roman patronage into the symbolic frameworks of local communities.¹⁶ They helped facilitate the games, festivals, and veneration of the emperor that bonded together the Greek communities of Syria beneath the auspices of imperial rule. The Roman empire was thereby characterized by an imperial administration with centralizing tendencies, the cohesiveness of provincial and regional *koina*, and the dynamic power of the civic *boulē*, which promoted civic and regional solidarity within ethnically and culturally diverse citizen populations. The Parthian empire, with its assortment of magistrates and client dynasts, did not organize Greek polities or *koina* in such ways. Roman imperialism and its Greek civic councils therefore affected local culture more potently.

¹⁴ Ando (2000). Provincials accepted the imperial system's authority because its documented "speech acts" constituted "validity claims" that satisfied "certain conditions of rationality," as Ando (2000) 73–78 (77 quoted) has advocated. Such communicative action creates a shared "inter-subjective lifeworld" with "universal validity" among practitioners. Habermas (1984) 70–72; (1987a) 130–52; (1987b) 298–99, 311–16, 322.

¹⁵ Ando (2000) 363–66; Sommer (2009) 239–42; Bang (2008) 106–122, 182–89, 221–224. *P. Yadin* 12–15, 25–27 and the *P. Euphr.* papyri of chapter 11 show how Babatha, a Jewish woman of Arabia, and inhabitants of the Middle Euphrates could solicit the intervention of Roman administrators.

¹⁶ Dio Chrys., 40.16, 45.3, 48.11 illuminates how the Roman administration and local elites collaborated to form councils.

Through Rome's patronage and oversight, Greek councils and their civic communities interwove and reconstituted existing cultural idioms in ways that generated new meanings, modes of performance, and forms of culture. Individuals and communities in the Syrian province(s) could integrate countless cultural traditions into overlapping categories possessing points of sameness and difference. As a result, the residents of Syrian cities often had diverse cultural and ethnic values while still belonging to a civic community informed by shared civic traditions and symbols. A city's pantheon could include divinities from numerous societies that represented diverse elements of the civic body, and these deities could assume different meanings for culturally segmented worshippers. Despite this, heterogeneous citizens cohered as a civic community. They participated in the same symbolic field in ways that produced experiences of commonality even if cultural symbols could yield multiple interpretations and reaffirm other ethnic or social affiliations. Such civic cultures enabled the cities of Syria to maintain significant connections to a wider Greek and Roman world, to peasants in the countryside, and, in some cases, to nomads even if differences still registered. The Roman-patronized Greek *polis* therefore structured diverse identification categories and networks in ways that made them intersect.

The Greek civic councils' intervention stimulated such social and cultural processes. Neither the Seleucids nor the Romans created a single homogenous Greek or Roman culture. Instead, the Roman administration and Greek elites consolidated the diverse communities and local cultures of Syria into a cohesive network by stimulating peer polity interaction and by extending Greek citizenship to ethnic Syrians, Phoenicians, and "Arabs." These processes produced diverse and localizing Greek performances. Greek civic councils, however, did not merely stimulate such social and cultural changes; they also were its symbols. During this period the *boulē* became the defining characteristic feature of Greek civic life and thereby of all civic communities that coveted Greek recognition.¹⁷ After the Jewish temple's destruction, even traditional Jewish cities in territories of the province of Judea (later Syria Palestina), such as Sepphoris and Tiberias of Galilee, apparently earned peer recognition as Greek polities and were governed by *boulai*. While it cannot be treated in detail, it should be noted that the integration of Jews into Greek civic life occurred even while many Jews still practiced some form of Judaism and while social tensions, as

¹⁷ As Sartre (2001a) 650 notes, *boulai* are attested in over twenty cities in Roman Syria (excluding Mesopotamia). J.-Ch. Balty (1991) 494–547 has identified *bouleutēria* in Petra, Ptolemais, Dura-Europos, Samaria-Sebaste, Ascalon, Amman, Gadara, Gerasa, and Pella.

exemplified by 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra, the rise of rabbinic movements, and the Bar Kochba revolt, persisted.¹⁸ Moreover, since civic councils intervened in the city's public and civic affairs, collected taxes and revenues, organized the city's topography, and controlled and exploited the region's socio-economic resources, they held the summit of the power hierarchy amid continuous processes of cultural hegemony.¹⁹ They engaged the moral and cultural expectations and judgments of their citizen audiences, but they also dictated which popular cultural traditions were discarded or integrated into civic life. They even stimulated the production of new forms of culture by interweaving diverse idioms.

As Roman imperialism intensified, its idioms and patronage were woven into the fabric of Greek civic orders. Although Greek citizens increasingly gained Roman citizenship and embraced Roman identifications, in collective terms Greek citizens still perceived Romans to be outsiders, and they classified "villagers" in a similar way. Nonetheless, by appropriating certain symbols of Roman authority and of Near Eastern culture, Greek cities incorporated Roman and Near Eastern languages, architecture, and cults into their localizing forms of Greekness. Under the Romans, the patronage and presence of Roman emperors and governors therefore became an integral component of Greek civic performances and how citizens understood their community.

The civic councils, patronized by Roman authorities, did not merely prompt and moderate social or cultural transitions. Their authority, power, and privileged positioning were embedded in economic and material factors that their activity helped replicate. The available data that excavations, archaeological surveys, literary sources, and inscriptions provide may primarily illuminate Syria's economic prosperity in late antiquity, but they also reflect burgeoning conditions in the imperial period generally. They indicate that Rome's tribute-extracting imperialism, which excelled to "mobilise, amass, and concentrate resources," stimulated Syria's cities and

¹⁸ Sepphoris was renamed Diocaesarea, and during Caracalla's reign, its coin legends documented the friendship of its council and the Roman Senate and People. Meshorer (1985) 37, 113, no. 95. A lead weight's inscription lists as Sepphoris' *agoranomoi* Simon, son of Aianus, and Justus. Nagy (1996) 201 (preferred reading). The formation of *boulai* in Judea and Galilee by the early second century perhaps led Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51; *P. Dura* 10 to describe Joseph of Arimathaia anachronistically as a *bouleutēs*. According to Josephus, *Vit.* 64, Galilean Tiberias possessed a civic council before the Jewish revolt, but its implications are unclear. Seth Schwartz (2001) 129–61; (2006), esp. 29–33, 45–47 (with n. 76–77) clarifies this transition, provides full documentation, and contextualizes rabbinic movements.

¹⁹ For the civic council as decreeing and collecting taxes, see the Palmyrene Tariff Decree of *PAT* 0259=*CIS* 2.3, 3913. Now, Healey (2009) 164–205. Bang (2008) 106–122, 182–89, 221–24 provides analysis.

rural hinterland to expand agrarian production, sustain population growth, and generate commercial exchanges, with crops being produced for local consumption and regional or Mediterranean export.²⁰ This prosperity and this increased production were enhanced by the Roman administration's stabilization and expansion of Greek civic life, along with its settlement of veterans in rural hinterlands, its construction of roads, and its maintenance of legions paid in coin.²¹ While the human toll that farmers, miners, and other laborers paid for such economic conditions was often grim,²² the presence of substantial urban units incited efforts to maximize arable farmland and livestock production through organized projects or personal investment. This increased agricultural production was likely to have been sustained by an array of landowning peasants, elite-owned properties, or imperial estates, and it was generated by autonomous villages or those subordinate to *poleis*. In any scenario, it stimulated population growth in cities and rural settlements.²³

Although it is difficult to date exactly when Syria produced exports for the broader Mediterranean economy, the network of peer city-states that the (unequal) collaboration of Roman authorities and civic councilors maintained probably propelled regional commerce and economic transactions between city and countryside.²⁴ While the Roman administration maintained roads and other elements of infrastructure, Greek city-states minted imperial and provincial coins, manufactured products that farmers

²⁰ Bang (2008) 121–27 treats Rome's tributary system (126 quoted). Butcher (2003) 135–222; Sartre (2007a) provide important discussion. Aperghis (2004); Chankowski and Duyrat (2005) analyze the Seleucid economy. The best evidence is late antique, but it likely elucidates the contributions of the preceding period. Some useful archaeological surveys, studies, and overviews of rural life and regional transitions in Syria or Arabia, including the "Dead Cities," Galilee, and the Hauran are Tchlenko (1953–58); Sodini *et al.* (1980); Callot (1984); Dentzer (1985–86) especially Villeneuve's essay; Tate (1992), (1997); Yener *et al.* (2000); Frankel *et al.* (2001); Graf (2001), with bibliography; Casana (2007); Clauss-Balty (2008); Fischer-Genz (2008); al-Maqdissi *et al.* (2010); Rousset (2011). Decker (2009) examines late antique agriculture and village life.

²¹ Pollard (2000) 171–212; Butcher (2003) 135–79 provide important explorations. De Giorgi (2007) emphasizes veteran settlement.

²² Mattingly (2011) 125–66 examines the impact of labor exploitation on slaves, free laborers, and peasants. Bang (2008) 124 suggests that Rome's tributary system made peasants work harder to pay imperial and local taxes and rents. Mattingly (2011) 166–99, with Mattingly *et al.* (2007), discuss the human costs of mining at Wadi Faynan (Phaino), Jordan.

²³ Butcher (2003) 82–83, 161–78; Sartre (2001a) 735–54; for late antiquity, Decker (2009) 174–227. Kamash (2010) 17–91 connects intensified irrigation to population increase and symbiosis between city and countryside. Antiochenes built a canal from Mt. Amanus to Antioch. Feissel (1985). Wickham (2005) 443–59 indicates that while regional surveys stress free landowning peasants, elites owned rural estates farmed by peasant laborers too. Fischer-Genz (2012) 1033–36 provides synthesis.

²⁴ Butcher (2003) 180–222 (especially 186–89), with bibliography; recently Fischer-Genz (2012) 1036–38. Also, Decker (2001) and, for late antiquity, Wickham (2005) 443–59; Decker (2009) 121–73, 228–57.

could use for agriculture and irrigation, and structured public spaces that facilitated congregation, exchange, and interaction. Civic councils therefore contributed to Syria's regional economy, which in turn maintained conditions in which they could flourish. Additionally, regional religious festivals and games provided economic incentives for traders and merchants, with Syria's resident legions offering additional potential for commercial transactions. Moreover, civic councils, which consisted of rich landowners who extracted taxes and rents, harnessed resources to perform civic benefactions that shaped experiences of community. As they organized civic life and its cultural symbols, they also distributed food and built nymphaea, baths, fountains, temples, and other buildings for public use. Sustained by prosperous material conditions and peasant exploitation, civic councils in turn bolstered the regional economy by maintaining stable networking communities defined by experiences of common citizenship, not ethnic difference.

Despite economic ties between town and countryside, Greek citizens and peasants inhabited distinct realms of status, and in ways that obviated ethnic differences. Instead of distinguishing between ethnic Greeks and Syrians, Greek civic ideologies of Roman imperial Syria emphasized, just as in Egypt, differences between Greek "citizens" (*politai*) and "peasants" (*geōrgoi*), villagers (*kōmētai*), or, in some cases, "barbarians."²⁵ The self-identifying "Greeks among the Danaboi" whom the Herodians settled in the Hauran therefore stressed that they were distinct from local peasants.²⁶ This distinction was also emphasized in a legal case heard by Caracalla at Antioch in 216. In this case, a group of peasants (*geōrgoi*) from a village outside Damascus, many of which appear recently to have become Roman citizens, accused a local notable of usurping the priesthood of their temple.²⁷ The conceptual difference between citizen and peasant evaded the fact that rural residents could become citizens of *poleis*, and it obscured how diverse were the wealth, occupations, and rural

²⁵ Hadrian conceived of Roman imperial space as harboring Greeks and barbarians. Oliver (1989) 462, no. 242. An edict of Caracalla distinguishes non-Greek "Egyptians" or "peasants" (*agroikoi*) from Greek Alexandrians in accent, appearance, and dress not conducting to "citizen-like" life or behavior (*poleitikōtera zōē* and *anastrophē poleitike*). Oliver (1989) 508, no. 262.

²⁶ Sartre (1993) 133–35.

²⁷ Roussel and Visscher (1942–43) 179, with Lewis (1968) 255 (emendations). Such residents were "villagers" or "peasants" even though another inscription at the temple of the Highest Zeus at Dmeir attests that the large village (*mētrokōmē*) of the *Thelseēnoi* and its temple had organizational structures based in part on Greek and Roman civic models. Roussel and Visscher (1942–43) 195. Documents associated with Babatha (*P. Yadin*) and Salome of Mahoza illuminate village life; Cotton (1995); Cotton and Yardeni (1997) 166–243, with other texts in the volume. Waddington (1870) 2399, 2479: "villagers" (*kōmētai* or *geōrgoi*).

landowning of “peasants” (despite their exploitation).²⁸ But it was amplified by the fact that civic councils exploited peasants and villagers to fund their benefactions to citizen audiences.²⁹ As ethnic Syrians became civic Greeks, the distinction between citizen and peasant generally trumped ethnicity.

Despite status distinctions between citizens and peasants, the *boulē* or its individual councilors could, under imperial oversight, intervene in village affairs by collecting various tributes or regulating other affairs. During the mid-120s CE, the civic council at Petra, prompted by a Jewish woman named Babatha from the village of Mahoza, appointed guardians for her son.³⁰ Because the integration of rural elites into urban civic councils undercut their potential patronage of dissident peasants, councilors were often recruited from the countryside. They often maintained land and residences in their “villages” of origin, possessed rural estates, and garnered rural clients.³¹ Still, the *boulē*’s structuring of the countryside was not as systematic as its regulation of urban life. Villagers therefore structured space in ways that distinguished settled territory from a nomadic wild, and they maintained temples whose priests or officials often constituted landowners or economic producers.³² They could even organize civic institutions modeled on those of *poleis*.³³ But amid overall economic prosperity, population growth, and commercial networking, the Greek *polis* in certain ways exploited and discriminated against “peasants.” It thereby facilitated the social cohesion of ethnic Greeks and Syrians who benefited as they shared Greek citizenship.

²⁸ Graf (2001) examines wealth and diversified occupations of rural hinterlands. Although focusing on late antiquity, Wickham (2005) 443–49 stresses that free peasant landowners and large elite-owned estates produced crops for local use and regional export.

²⁹ Bang (2008) 110.

³⁰ *P. Yadin* 12, with 14.25, 15.5, 27.7. It was only when Babatha was dissatisfied with the *boulē*’s lack of enforcement that she appealed to the imperial administration (*P. Yadin* 13–15 and 25–27). Ando (2000) 381; Sommer (2009) 240 discuss.

³¹ References to civic councils and councilors from inscriptions erected in villages probably describe councilors of nearby *poleis*, not village councils. Moors (2002) 191–203. Tate (1997) 69 observes that councilors often owned rural estates. Aurelios Abidsautas, a *bouleutēs* of Neapolis in *P. Euphr.* 4.4, had a rural estate in Beth Phouraia (*P. Euphr.* 1.4–6). Feissel and Gascou (1995) 71–72, 96–97. Councilors also donated to rural projects. In a village of the Hauran, a “*naos* of the *Haeichala*” had been completed under the treasurers “Markos Aurelios Aneos, son of Gaoros, and Gaoros, son of Oasaithos, the councilor (*bouleutēs*).” *IGR* 3.1093; Millar (1993a) 319.

³² Sommer (2003c) 217–24, (2004d) 199–207; Tate (1997) 67–69; Aliquot (2008), (2009) 71–126: rural sanctuaries in Lebanon; Dentzer-Feydy (2003) 40–109, Weber (2009): Si’ and Sahr in the Hauran.

³³ Sartre (1993) 117–35, (1999) 197–222; Rey-Coquais (1993) 137–49; Grainger (1995) 192–93; MacAdam (1983) 105–15, (1984) 45–62; Aliquot (2008) 92–95: village leadership.

Civic councils, hegemonies, and symbolic landscapes

The material and ideological conditions that civic councils exploited and perpetuated were intimately tied to the production of civic topographies. As civic councils engaged with local audiences amid their hegemonic positioning, they sculpted civic landscapes. These landscapes and their material features in turn shaped the experience of Greek civic cohesion on a physical and symbolic level. The production of such Greek civic terrains was therefore central to Syria's expressions and performances of Greekness. Although idioms of Near Eastern origin populated such urban topographies, the framework of signification that civic councils had produced translated them into symbols of Greek communities and thereby reshaped their significance.

By the reigns of Trajan and Hadrian, two processes had occurred in many Syrian cities. They had produced Greek civic *politeiai* and *boulai*, and they had undergone dramatic monumentalization through the cooperation of Roman authorities with municipal elites. The centralizing and integrative architectural form of the colonnaded street, which bisected cities and spanned their entire length, characterized such monumentalization.³⁴ Although colonnaded streets emerged in various forms in the Roman empire, it was especially within the Near East that vast colonnades visually connected the margins of their cities to their social centers, thereby stabilizing contexts of civic inclusion. The creation of such integrated landscapes prompted citizens of Syrian cities to experience corporate civic Greek identifications, group affiliations, and modes of performance. It enabled them to connect themselves cognitively to the Roman patrons who had helped shape the institutional, topographical, and ideological framework of civic life.³⁵ Such processes had not occurred under Seleucid rule, and their stimulation was likely to have been prompted by the increase in population, rural settlement size, and urban density that occurred in Syria during the Roman period.³⁶ As Rome established Greek civic communities,

³⁴ Segal (1997): monumentalization. Tabaczek (2004) 209–16; Bru (2011) 63–82: colonnaded streets in cities (including Antioch, Apamea, Gerasa, and Palmyra).

³⁵ Under the Seleucids, Greek communities had not necessarily possessed *boulai*, and various ethnic constituents of settlements fashioned distinct socio-political practices and discursive fields. This hindered the formation of integrative topography; notables facilitated public markets, temples and, perhaps food distribution, but not vast colonnaded streets. Butcher (2003) 228 and 259–61. Archaeological evidence is scarce, but typical Seleucid *poleis* probably integrated the countryside into an administrative and socio-economic framework while providing focal points for market and cult activity.

³⁶ Gawlikowski (1997b) 37–54; Tate (1997) 55–71 present epigraphic, archaeological, and survey evidence. Tate (1992), whose archaeological survey of village life reevaluates Tchalenko's pioneering

land-owning councilor classes, and tributary structures in Syria, Syria perhaps did not have enough ethnic Greeks to populate councils and citizen bodies as the Syrian peasant population grew. As a result, Roman magistrates and Greek civic authorities had to generate Greek civic identifications among ethnic Syrians. Vast colonnaded streets were conduits that connected and permitted access, whether physical or visual, to various civic-cultic zones, and their construction expedited civic cohesion and reaffirmed the authority of councilors who built or maintained them.³⁷

Although not Syrian, the sophist Dio, from Prusa in Bithynia, supports such observations. In certain orations, Dio's literary persona claimed to have financed the construction of a *stoa* in Prusa. He built it because he wanted Prusa to rival Smyrna, Ephesus, Antioch, and Tarsus, which now possessed huge colonnades.³⁸ His emulation of these cities' projects indicates that he was planning a colonnaded street, not a portico enclosing an open space. He alleged that he had produced his speeches concerning its construction to refute enemies who accused him of coveting excessive prestige, and his statements suggest that such benefactions could be inflammatory. While reflecting benefactors' prestige, it could necessitate the destruction of private residences and shops or even the removal of tombs.³⁹ Also, Dio's vast building project exposed him to accusations of tyrannical behavior from elites and citizens.

These accusations, whether actual or putative, show that the discursive and performative contexts that Greek *poleis* produced did not suppress conflicts among aristocrats and between the council and the *dēmos*. It instead channeled such mutual antagonism in ways that impacted civic terrains and citizen performance, and it prompted competition among elites for honor before an audience of citizens entitled to public benefactions from them.⁴⁰ This agonistic context informed the construction of colonnades, whose production subordinated private interests to the communal needs of

study (1950s), treats cadastration, population increase, and economic prosperity in the limestone massif east of Antioch, which continued unabated until 250. Likewise, Frankel *et al.* (2001) (early Roman Galilee); Casana (2007) 195–222, Yener (2005), Gerritsen *et al.* (2008) 252–60 (the Amuq valley outside Antioch); Vallat and Leblanc (2008) (the Hauran near Si').

³⁷ Stierlin (1987) 81. March (2009) 60–112; Frakes (2009) 83–90; MacDonald (1986) 32–72 examine how colonnades, porticoes, and “connectivity” shaped ancient experience.

³⁸ Dio Chrys., 40.11; 47.13, 16. The *stoa* was apparently almost finished during the proconsulship of Varenus Rufus (105–106). Tarsus' *decumanus* perhaps had a colonnade by the early second century CE. Zoroglu (2004) 373–78.

³⁹ Dio Chrys., 40.8–9; 47.16–17.

⁴⁰ Salmeri (2000) 67–72. The speeches putatively presented before Prusa's popular assembly or the *boulē* (such as 40, 42–3, 45, 47–8, 49–50) reflect the council's internal competition and mutual antagonisms between civic councilors and citizen viewers. Even Dio impeded his rivals' building projects. Pliny, *Ep.* 10.81.1, 7.

a citizen body while creating a focal point for elite rivalry. Dio's rhetoric also emphasized that such colonnades were the most visibly prominent public venues and instruments for generating a cohesive civic community even if their construction incited internal divisions. He argued that his colonnade was for use by the city's *politai* and that it was to facilitate *synoikismos*, the assembling of fragmented social constituents into a cohesive civic body.⁴¹ Through it he hoped "to assemble" (*synagogein*) rural inhabitants and citizens of nearby cities to "live in unity" (*synoikizein*) in Prusa and gather into "one single *polis*."⁴²

Dio thereby envisioned the colonnade to be an instrument of social cohesion because it made important public spaces and civic bodies visible and physically accessible to citizens, who in turn subjected themselves and their public performances to a civic audience's gaze. Yet, Dio also argued that the *boulē* and the citizen assembly had permitted him to build it, and they had sought the consent and perhaps the aid of the Roman proconsular governor.⁴³ As Dio described, he had financed the colonnade, but his fellow *politai*, the *boulē*, and the Roman administration cooperated to complete the work amid challenges posited by his peer rivals, who sought to prevent a project highlighting Dio's prestige. Constructed through a combination of collaboration, competition, and channeled antagonism among local elites, citizens, and Roman administrators, the colonnade was an instrument of social *synoikismos* and a vector that enabled citizens to gaze upon and be seen by fellow citizens. It constituted the "most visible spot of the city"⁴⁴ (Figures 3–4).

During the Roman period, Syrian Greek *boulai* incorporated ethnically diverse landowning elites who performed the types of benefactions just described for citizens. They beautified their cities for diverse citizen populations, but in ways that amplified their individual and collective credit. However they marked themselves as elites, the members of civic councils were tied together by socio-economic equilibrium, an institutional consciousness, access to landed property, and elite cultural idioms not accessible to citizens of lesser means. They promoted an ideology of solidarity and cooperation among themselves. As a result, elite council members typically exploited forms of Greek *paideia* cultivated by Greek

⁴¹ Dio Chrys., 45.12–13; 47.

⁴² Dio Chrys., 45.12–13. Dio compares his endeavors to Theseus' *synoikismos* of Attica.

⁴³ Dio Chrys., 40.6; 47.13.

⁴⁴ Dio Chrys., 47.18. As Dio claims, after the temple of Zeus burnt down, he relocated its honorific statues (*andriantai*) to the most conspicuous place of the city, presumably his *stoa* under way. At Syrian Gadara, the city's most prominent public buildings and statuary lined the colonnaded street. Hoffmann (2002) 119–22.



Figure 3. The “oval plaza” of Gerasa, leading to the central colonnade. View from the southwest.



Figure 4. The central colonnade of Apamea. View from the east.

and Roman elites throughout the empire to distinguish themselves from “lesser” citizens untrained in its literature and art.⁴⁵ Their cultivation of Greek *paideia*, often combined with extensive personal resources, bonds of patronage, and elevated lineage, marked them as the best *politai* and as qualified to oversee a Greek *politeia*. Yet, as ethnic Syrians and the

⁴⁵ Classical learning and the social context of Roman-era Greek *poleis* shaped concerns and interactions of aristocrats and civic audiences. Ma (2000b) 123–24.

like increasingly became council members, some civic councilors practiced localizing forms of Greek *paideia* or not at all, with un-classical or Near Eastern idioms marking elite status (chapters 6 and 11). Accordingly, a mastery of the literature, art, and erudition of the Greek elites of classical cities did not always establish bonds among councilors of networking Greek communities. In local contexts, what constituted Greek *paideia* could be redefined. Instead, a common civic ethos, land-owning and tributary interests, and sets of socio-political concerns above all affirmed the shared interests and status of civic councilors and elevated them above the civic community that they claimed to represent. In such ways, the typical *boulē* assimilated an ethnically eclectic group into what audiences classified as a Greek civic institution, and it governed a civic population that was no longer segmented administratively into ethnic components. As noted by Dio, councilors were “especially Greek” and “superior” to the rest in their performances of civic Greekness. Their authority dwarfed all opposition.⁴⁶

Ethno-cultural tension, signification, and hegemony

The new expressions of Greekness facilitated by civic polities and the activities of their councils did not dissolve all cultural tensions. The material differences embedded in the Greek and Aramaic languages and divergent cultural traditions could still prompt internal differences within communities. Still, it must be emphasized that such cultural interaction also stimulated the signifiers “Greek” and “Syrian” to assume new referents as Greeks and Syrians integrated “hybrid” forms into their civic practices. The terms bore increasing civic as opposed to ethnic connotations, and they encapsulated culturally hybrid performances. Recent scholarship, for instance, has suggested that the Roman-era use of baetyls (aniconic stones) to represent divinities, along with the complex iconographies and traits of divinities at Heliopolis-Baalbek, was not simply an enduring Near Eastern practice but had been stimulated by the Roman Near East’s cultural context.⁴⁷ It is for this reason significant that Greek city-states of Syria integrated into their divine pantheons such objects that many contemporary Greeks deemed “eastern.” Likewise, citizens could interpret the innovative expressions of Greekness produced by contemporary civic life simultaneously to be “Greek” and “non-Greek.” That is, speakers of Aramaic or practitioners of Near Eastern or “hybrid” cultural forms could advocate differences

⁴⁶ Dio Chrys., 50.2 and 8.

⁴⁷ Gaifman (2008); Stewart (2008); baetyls. Kropp (2010b); deities at Heliopolis.

between themselves and practitioners of classical Greek culture. Citizens with kinship connections to peasants or nomads could distinguish themselves from people with Greek genealogies. Yet, amid such tensions, such Syrian Greeks also framed themselves as members of Greek civic orders that celebrated their Near Eastern affiliations and idioms.

Indeed, the framework of signification that the Greek city-state generated did not eradicate all ethnic and cultural difference, but it instead made such difference, including the antithesis of Greek/non-Greek, into constituent components of a broader and constantly transforming Greek civic order. Syrians could, after all, experience symbols from multiple vantage points without situating them securely in a single unitary system.⁴⁸ Greek citizens operating within the *polis*' framework could envision their cultural performances, with their profound variations, as simultaneously Greek (an expression of membership within a peer polity network of Greek cities despite unique points of difference) and anti-Greek (antagonistic to the mainstream culture of the network through unique points of difference). Ethno-cultural tensions were therefore mitigated by the civic affiliations produced within Roman-era city-states, where people could claim a shared Greek identification while cultivating diverse or differing idioms.

Amid such tension, the *boulē* brought solidarity to civic elites as its councilors incorporated Roman imperial idioms into their community's corporate expressions of civic Greekness. It produced a field of signification that enabled civic communities to be constituted and to cohere around shared symbols. Its members patronized civic-cultic festivals that reaffirmed its community's civic identifications and the council's authority. They also created public spaces and monuments radiating a civic ideology, even if certain parties tried to appropriate public spaces for personal uses or charged civic symbols with different meanings. Accordingly, while the *boulē* never stemmed private interests, eradicated civic fragments, or restricted completely how civic symbols were interpreted, it constituted a cohesive governing body that maintained order and essential points of intersection among the various social segments and socio-economic parties of its city.⁴⁹ It produced a conceptual framework that shaped how malleable civic symbols could be interpreted, and it created sets of social dispositions and options that facilitated overlapping solidarities among its city's various kinship, cultural, cultic, or occupational groups.

⁴⁸ Holquist (1990) 23–28 discusses Bakhtin's unity and heteroglossia.

⁴⁹ Desideri (2000) 92–107 treats elite conflicts in Dio's speeches.

In such ways, the civic council ensured that certain local traditions would meet the needs of Greek civic life. By structuring public life, civic cults, spatial organization, and the civic–cultic calendar and by manufacturing the cultural symbols reflected on coins and public inscriptions, the *boulē* asserted its “intellectual and moral leadership” and imposed upon the urban population its “hegemony,” an “experienced reality” that permeated many aspects of its life.⁵⁰ The Greek city possessed a symbolic landscape that various interest groups competed to control and define, and the *boulē*, which consisted of landed elites who extracted tribute or engaged in various commercial ventures, was the dominant group. It had elevated its socio-economic purposes and its moral unity from a “corporative” to a “universal plane” in such ways that civic life was conceptualized and enacted as a “continual formation and overcoming of unstable equilibriums” between the *boulē* and other interest groups.⁵¹ While engaging and responding to the idioms and trends of non-elites, the civic council reconstituted the organization and meanings of cultural symbols. It did so while being within their power and exposed to the moral critique of citizens, who scrutinized and judged councilor activity. Within such urban landscapes, councils’ hegemonic faculties integrated citizens into shared experiences of civic commonality, and they were resisted (if at all) only at the level of households and their cults (including, in some contexts, Judaism and Christianity).⁵²

While passing laws and decrees, the council did not exert hegemony merely by acting as an organized political institution.⁵³ It was also a complex network of municipal elites with their own personal resources, agrarian surplus, bonds of patronage, and location within complex relationships of power. Being elite landowners and official governors, they exploited peasants by extracting labor, rents, or tribute/tariffs, but they competed before the gaze of a discrete citizen body to confer their resources upon it. The *boulē*’s members thereby generated and operated within a framework of

⁵⁰ Eley (1999) 322–23. Eley emphasizes that hegemony occurs when a class asserts widely accepted moral authority, and the *boulē*, an institution of organized elites, qualified as such a moral overseer. Mallon (1995) 6–7 stresses that hegemony is a process through which power is contested and legitimated among social groups and therefore produces dispositions, practices, and beliefs within which even elite identities and positions are circumscribed.

⁵¹ Gramsci (1957) 170. Despite their premodern existence, civic councils constituted socially dominant groups in their “singleness of economic and political purpose” and their “intellectual and moral unity.” Connolly (2007) 39–40 usefully formulates.

⁵² Cults to Mithras, the Jewish deity, and Christ, perhaps challenged the hegemonic processes of Roman imperialism (even while being its product) through their distinctive iconographies and structuring of the cosmos. Elsner (2001a).

⁵³ Syria has yielded few inscribed laws/decrees, but they probably existed. Sartre (2008) 35–36.

performance in which notables earned prestige by performing benefactions for a civic audience. In turn, citizens expected and honored these benefactions. They offered active communicative critiques of elite citizen performance and viewed honorific inscriptions and statues situated on parts of the urban terrain to which they had physical and visual access. These overlapping moral expectations prompted notables to mobilize their personal resources, clients, and kinsmen to build visible public spaces, buildings, and monuments for citizen approval. Embracing principles of symmetry and linearity, they used colonnades and porticoes to direct the movements and gazes from the peripheries of the city toward optical centers, such as divine sanctuaries, *agorai*, bath complexes, or theaters, where their benefactions and their honors could be witnessed. Even if they received honors from personal clients or kinsmen, they accepted such distinctions and enhanced prestige before discrete audiences of citizens in ways that made personal relationships and praise into yet another dimension of the hegemonic framework that the *boulē* produced. Such was the context of civic performance that emerged within the Greek cities of Syria under Roman rule. This was the *doxa*, the intersection of subjective strategies and objective sets of rules, which made civic participation and honor before a civic audience meaningful.⁵⁴ The *boulē* most of all generated, perpetuated, and naturalized this system of performance in which sophists like Dio, as they imitated Demosthenes and the classical *polis* structures in which he had acted, could boast that “the most satisfying thing” was “to be loved by citizens.”⁵⁵

The complex social phenomena just described are documented in Roman imperial Syria by diverse forms of evidence, but the chapters to follow emphasize the significance of inscriptions for several reasons. First, inscriptions are important evidence for the formation of Greek civic communities and peer polity interaction, but they were also among its primary instruments and symbols. Their production often constituted a civic, social, or cultural performance. Second, inscriptions reflect the aspirations and self-presentation of the social groups or “elite” individuals who erected them, but they were also texts that could in theory be read and material objects that prompted certain visual and tactile experiences and interacted with other material objects. Being simultaneously textual and material, civic inscriptions were therefore instrumental (but not exclusive) in shaping the discursive and performative framework of citizenship within

⁵⁴ Bourdieu (1977) 164 describes *doxa* as a framework of instinctively ingrained beliefs, dispositions, and experiences of the social world produced by embodied practices.

⁵⁵ Dio Chrys., 44.1–2. Likewise, Dem., *De. cor.*

or against which “mass” and elite, citizens and villagers, free people and slaves had to orient themselves amid their own strategies of social, cultural, or ethnic identification. Third, although civic landscapes housed innumerable material objects and monuments, both specific epigraphic texts and the discursive and performative framework that they reflected and bolstered in antiquity illustrate one meaningful “context” (among others) within which other materials or practices were endowed with social or cultural significance. Inscriptions therefore facilitate certain hermeneutic lenses and inform possibilities for analyzing material evidence associated with them or for reconstructing a broader civic ethos and performative framework within which material evidence was embedded. Finally, even inscriptions and epigraphic performances that seem to reflect “non-civic” concerns often mimicked, engaged, bolstered, or communicated the civic ethos that more “public” inscriptions illuminate.

Accordingly, many inscriptions, texts, and articles of material evidence examined in Part II could be deemed isolated “elite” expressions that do not directly capture the “voices” of non-elites or social underclasses. But evidence for elite citizen performance is still relevant to the examination of non-elite experiences in Roman Syria. Such evidence illuminates the social formations and categories against or within which non-elites, whether citizens or “villagers,” had to position themselves. In fact, within the Greek *poleis* of Roman-era Syria, municipal elites sustained by Roman support engaged in civic–cultic performances that generated experiences of Greek civic commonality and knit together heterogeneous populations. By doing so, they reaffirmed civic solidarity and perpetuated the social hierarchy. These collective acts solidified “community” and located individuals within or outside it, and they educated civic populations in the meanings of the symbols around which their communities cohered. Although elites positioned themselves as exemplars of Greek culture through their wealth, euergetism, *paideia*, networks, and epigraphic habits, people of lower status were in many instances members of the Greek *polis* and its expressions of commonality or otherwise had to navigate their marginality or even utter exclusion. The city’s civic–cultic performances, propelled by the cooperation and competition of elites who often engaged in epigraphic performances, provided the interpretative framework within which citizen individuals and groups interacted. Elite authorities communicated this framework through the symbols and linguistic idioms that they incorporated into diverse objects and material media, such as inscriptions, coin legends, architecture, and organized urban spaces. Yet, they also did so beneath the pressure of a popular citizen gaze, whose expectations informed

elite behavior. Even if total agreement on the meanings of acts, objects, and materials was not attained, the *polis* created the dispositional structure framing options for signification, and non-elites had to navigate this structure whether they were citizens, slaves, or local peasants, whether male or female.⁵⁶ The *polis* in this sense generated and regenerated performances and experiences of Greek community through diverse material media. Inscriptions provide vital lenses for interpreting how it did so.

Conclusion

How the Palmyrene civic council honored the deeds of *politeia/plṑty* performed by the caravan patron Ogelos, son of Makkaïos can be interpreted through many different hermeneutic lenses. Scholars have recently harnessed concepts of *bricolage*, *mestizaje*, *creolization*, *hybridity*, and *boundary crossing* to understand complex practices such as his. While somewhat differing from one another in emphasis and nuance, they highlight the diverse precedents for provincial cultures and address the active contributions of provincials to their own societies. Still, these formulations share problems of generality. As described previously, they locate provincial cultures only vaguely between Roman imperial and “native” traditions or otherwise posit a third category predicated on impurity or categorical non-being. They replicate a tendency to deny the existence of a Syrian culture and to regard the society and culture of Roman imperial Syria as not legitimately Greek (or Roman) or Near Eastern. Such conceptualizations, often like the previous approaches that they displace, posit that social affiliations and their cultural expressions were stable, uniform, and un-debated constants.

Recent discussions of “systematic differences” or “discrepant experiences” of Roman imperialism facilitate greater specificity. Such concepts enable greater scrutiny of the myriad of diverse positions that provincials staked toward their imperial formation and how they helped shaped a broader imperial cultural system. But such frames of reference also facilitate exploration of how provincials assumed diverging perspectives on core concepts for which scholars often assume standard codification. Despite the weight that Roman imperial Greek literature may place on “classical” culture, provincials did not necessarily agree on what Greek culture was and

⁵⁶ Butcher (2005) 145, 148–51, 154–55 indicates that elites who minted coins perhaps represented the position of fellow elites or advertised their status, without necessarily disseminating civic ideology. Despite this, they performed before civic audiences that recognized their claim to high status, and they could have endowed elite display with various meanings.

could express their Greekness through a complex array of idioms that may not have possessed “purely” Greek origins. The Greek polities of Syria in fact generated performative frameworks in which provincials engaged in discrepant experiences of Greekness while also reinventing Syrianness to meet imperial demands. They also often made the distinction between Greeks and “villagers” not so much differences of practice (even if these were factors) but of recognized status. Citizens of Greek polities may not have always cultivated traits radically different from those of “villagers” or “peasants,” who could be reasonably wealthy, economically diverse, and “cultured.” They could share meaningful connections to nomads. But their recognized status endowed their practices with uniquely “Greek” civic value, even if embedded in local traditions or Near Eastern idioms. This is at least one defensible way to understand the exemplary *politeia/plty* of the Aramaic-speaking Ogelos, son of Makkaïos.

The Greek polities that accomplished these feats were integral features of Roman imperialism, which established them in regions of Syria that the Seleucid and other Hellenistic empires had not. While perhaps not a consistent “policy,” the expansion and consolidation of peer polity networks in Syria were facilitated by the patronage of Roman governors and client kings. But their perpetuation depended on classes of civic councilors. While royal dynasts, for instance, harnessed diverse cultural symbols that signified authority for differing regional constituents, civic councils and their polities integrated diverse constituents into consolidated local communities. Civic councilors thereby established more intensive and quotidian bonds of reciprocity and euergetism with local Greek and non-Greek ethnic subjects in ways that incorporated them into discrete citizen bodies. Such a process produced new expressions of civic Greekness integrating Near Eastern symbols. The hegemonic authority of civic councils, which stabilized the network of Greek city-states that constituted the Syrian provincial *koinon*, stimulated greater cohesion, interaction, and commonality among civic communities than royal patronage or the intervention of local dynasts, who either failed to regulate ethnic tensions or had accomplished this task by so patronizing Greek polities that they became expendable. The impact of civic councils is evident in many of Syria’s notable cities, including Antioch, Apamea, Gerasa, Palmyra, and Dura-Europos. The next three chapters describe how.

CHAPTER FIVE

Cities of imperial frontiers (first to third centuries CE)

From late 113 to 117 CE, the Roman emperor Trajan launched an invasion of Parthian Mesopotamia. The Roman empire had already annexed the Nabataean kingdom of Arabia, but Trajan had further ambitions. He advanced to Ctesiphon and then the Persian Gulf, where an “Arab” dynast ruled Charax Spasinou and Mesene.¹ There Trajan compared himself to Alexander the Great by remarking that he would have advanced to India if he were still young. Instead, he went to Babylon to sacrifice where Alexander died.² As he emulated Alexander, Trajan’s campaign had penetrated a landscape populated foremost by speakers of Greek and Aramaic. Greek was the language of the settlers whom Alexander and his successors had brought to the region; Aramaic was the most cosmopolitan language of the Persian Achaemenid empire that Alexander had conquered.

Yet, it was between the invasions of Alexander and Trajan that an abortive campaign into Parthian territory, according to Plutarch, produced an intriguing example of Syrian bilingualism. During his campaign of 37–36 BCE, the Roman triumvir Antony was escorted by an Antiochene (probably of Antioch at Daphne) who could communicate with the Parthian foe. When the Parthians requested that they negotiate with someone who spoke Parthian or “Syrian,” Antony produced this Antiochene, named Alexander.³ While Plutarch is not explicit, Alexander probably communicated with the Parthians in Aramaic (not Parthian) and maintained Greek, widely spoken at Antioch, as his other fluent language. His mastery of Greek enabled him to correspond with inhabitants of the Roman imperial east and Rome’s widely bilingual aristocracy. As a speaker of Aramaic, he could confer with many Syrians and Parthian elites who spoke it, despite differences among dialects.

¹ Cass. Dio, 68.28.4. On Attambelos VII, see Schuol (2000) 344–48.

² Cass. Dio, 68.29.1–30.1. Trajan wrote the Senate that he surpassed Alexander’s conquests.

³ Plut., *Ant.* 46.2.

Accordingly, the Antiochene Alexander probably spoke the two languages that characterized the Syrian *ethnos*, whose members spoke Greek, Aramaic, both, or even more. Moreover, his example indicates how Aramaic could be spoken by and among Greek citizens, even in regions whose epigraphic texts are solely or primarily in Greek. Although the demographics of language cannot be certain, Plutarch's testimony suggests that Greek's association with overt prestige could have prompted Aramaic-speakers to use it for inscriptions in many regions. Likewise, regions of Syria in which Aramaic conveyed overt prestige produced Aramaic inscriptions. Prestige values and not merely speech use perhaps determined epigraphic languages.⁴ Though isolated, Alexander's bilingualism therefore suggests that Greek and Aramaic both were widely spoken in Syria, even in parts where Greek dominates the epigraphic record. It also indicates how Greek language and classical Greek idioms had become so "domestic" among Syrians that they no longer necessarily experienced them as "foreign." Greek, for instance, was not strictly the language of ethnic Greeks; it had become a staple of ethnic Syrians too. While it could mark differences of status and regional habitation with Syria, it did not necessarily distinguish one ethnicity from another or colonizers from colonized. It was one of the main languages of the Syrian *ethnos*, a social collective defined in civic terms. The pre-eminence of Greek in the epigraphic documents of Syria should be seen in this light.

When Trajan traveled east toward Mesopotamia over a century after Antony's sojourn, he penetrated a landscape whose communities encapsulated the linguistic and cultural intricacies of Alexander of Antioch, whether in singularity or in aggregate. This landscape contained Greek polities and local communities of varied ethnic, social, and cultural textures. These Greek cities were diverse. Some were Seleucid Greek foundations, whether established in isolation or planted in an existing community's terrain. Others were settlements of pre-Hellenistic origin that had adopted the ideological axes of Greek *poleis*. In some, Syrians, "Arabs," and other Near Eastern ethnics had obtained Greek citizenship. In others, namely those of Parthia, they had not. The Seleucid foundations with the most proximity and intensive bonds with the Mediterranean world sported the most classical Greek forms. More recent or remote cities located deep inland, in rugged hills, or in dry climes, had less intensive bonds and cultivated culturally diverse "Greek" expressions. Despite their diversity, these communities had a common trait. They interwove Greek, Roman, and Near

⁴ Sartre (2008) 30–32 (on the Hauran). Taylor (2002) in depth.

Eastern idioms in a vast spectrum of complex ways to express local and regional identifications amid Roman and Parthian encroachment.

While illustrating the formation of such civic cultures, this chapter examines the epigraphic documents and monumentalized spaces of three notable cities. As such, it treats the civic cultures of Antioch, Apamea, and Gerasa as test cases for the theoretical vision outlined in the previous chapter.⁵ It is not a comprehensive survey of the archaeological or architectural formations of these cities, and it cannot treat the wealth of recent research in their material culture, especially at Gerasa. But it outlines how their civic councils consolidated authority, produced experiences of autonomous civic community, and disseminated narratives of Roman patronage. They did so by organizing urban topographies, structuring cultural idioms, and contributing to the economic and material prosperity of a scrutinizing citizen audience. Although these processes did not entirely eliminate cultural tensions, civic councils and communities mitigated and defused them by generating common narratives and experiences of Greek citizenship and Roman imperial affiliation in ways that promoted civic solidarity. The epigraphic activities of Greek citizens, through their material presence and symbolic value, stimulated the frameworks of significations enabling civic communities to cohere. As Greek civic communities coalesced, they incorporated Roman and Near Eastern symbols into their cultural fabric. Citizen subjects interwove the same polyvalent symbols to express simultaneously reconstituted forms of Greek, Syrian, and “Arab” identification. But the primacy of Greek in these cities’ inscriptions indicates that within them Greek was not merely a language of civic Greekness and Syrianness, but it was also a language of overt prestige.

Antioch: Syria’s mother city

Despite its importance in antiquity, Antioch, a Seleucid foundation, has yet to produce substantial archaeological and epigraphic evidence for the Roman imperial period.⁶ While illuminated in late antiquity by Libanius, John Chrysostom, and John Malalas, literary sources for Antioch’s previous centuries are scarce. Accordingly, two inscribed *stēlai* documenting

⁵ This chapter does not survey Roman Syria’s cities. But see Millar (1993a) 225–487; Ball (2000) 150–205; Sartre (2001a) 640–733, (2005) 150–205; Butcher (2003) 223–69.

⁶ Antioch’s late antique mosaics and its coins constitute obvious exceptions. Kondoleon (2000); Becker and Kondoleon (2005). Poccardi (1994) and (2001); Callu (1997); Cabouret *et al.* (2005); Maxwell (2006); Sandwell (2007) analyze late antique Antioch or its topography. The 1930s excavations are in *Ant. Or.*

an irrigation project undertaken by Antioch's neighborhoods are among Roman Antioch's most vital sources. As this section stresses, they exemplify how the Greek civic context of Antioch integrated Roman cultural idioms and symbols of imperial supremacy into new expressions of Greekness. While these idioms marked significant cultural and political tensions, they also demonstrate how Greek civic authorities organized inscriptions and monuments to disseminate narratives casting Roman imperial patronage as an integral component of its civic Greekness. They highlight the contributions that Roman imperial patronage made to Antioch's civic topography, either directly or through councilors' activity.

While initiating his invasion of Parthia, Trajan was in Antioch when an earthquake struck the city in 115 CE.⁷ Before this catastrophe, the civic *boulē* and the imperial administration had collaborated to produce a Greek civic culture sustained by Roman patronage. Two Greek inscriptions elucidate the *boulē*'s moral and intellectual authority in interweaving diverse cultural symbols.⁸ The inscriptions commemorated a canal that citizens constructed in 73–74 CE, just a few years after Antioch had housed the previously discussed civic hostilities between Greeks and Jews. The canal, which dovetailed with other canal constructions undertaken by the Roman army, extended from the Orontes river to Mount Amanus, and the two inscribed *stēlai* recorded the Antiochenes' contributions.⁹ They accredited the Roman legate Marcus Ulpius Traianus with providing resources, but they praised the "metropolis of the Antiochenes" for completing it.¹⁰ Although the inscriptions are too fragmentary to list an author, the *boulē* or its elected magistrates most plausibly commissioned them.¹¹ As a result, their contents did not merely describe the canal's construction. Their production constituted acts of civic performance through which an organized institution of elites demonstrated how it represented the city's collective interests to a discrete citizen body.¹² By staging civic projects and situating inscriptions that recorded them in prominent spaces, the *boulē*'s

⁷ Cass. Dio, 68.24–25.

⁸ The provenance of stele A (but not B), found on the west bank of the Orontes' river, is certain. Feissel (1985) 79, 82.

⁹ Feissel (1985) 79–83; Millar (1993a) 86.

¹⁰ Lines 12–14 of stele A attest the Syrian legate. Lines 15–16 of stele A; 13–16 of B record how the "metropolis of the Antiochenes labored in their *plintheia* during the year 122" (Caesarian dating, 73–4).

¹¹ Epigraphic evidence (Cohen (2006) 93; Welles (1938) no. 170; *PAT* 1373=Inv. 10.29=*Agora* VI.16=*IGLS* 17.1.196) attests a Roman-era civic council. The inscriptions were in Greek and presented the date as 122 (Antioch's Caesarian date), which often appears on municipal issues. Feissel (1985) 84; Stele A, lines 1–4; Stele B, lines 1–3.

¹² Osborne (1999) 341–58 discusses how producing inscriptions was a public performance.

members reaffirmed their utility and their aristocratic prerogatives. Whether the city's citizens could read the inscriptions' text or merely encountered their material presence, the result was the same. Through such inscriptions, the civic council generated experiences of citizenship and community.¹³

In the inscriptions, the civic council described the project as occurring during the reign of Vespasian and his sons, Titus and Domitian, and it specified that the Syrian legate had provided for the project. By doing so, the authorities of the council incorporated symbols of Roman patronage into their civic rituals on many levels. The *boulē*'s erection of a public inscription in Greek constituted a performance of Greek citizenship that facilitated cognition of civic community for mass and elite and located the council at the civic hierarchy's summit. Yet, the inscription also facilitated the conceptualization of Antioch as a Greek city of the Syrian *ethnos*. Like many of Antioch's municipal coins, the council's inscription presented Antioch as the "metropolis of the Antiochenes," a title that defined Antioch as the "mother" or most important Greek city in the Syrian province. It signified how a network of peer *poleis* existed and how the Antiochenes collaborated and competed with its cities for prestige in the Syrian *ethnos*. Likewise, the *boulē*'s proclamation, which cited Roman administrators' support, incorporated Roman idioms of authority into its epigraphic performance of Greek civic status. While sustained by Roman imperial support, it reoriented Roman symbols in ways that contributed to narratives of civic autonomy and Greek citizenship. Antioch's adoption of foreign benefactors and Roman symbols in this sense did not make it any less autarchic or less Greek. The *boulē* dis-embedded Roman idioms from their previous contexts of signification and reformulated them as expressions and performances of civic Greekness.¹⁴

The collaboration of the Roman administration and Antioch's civic council produced the canal and the inscriptions memorializing it, and it stimulated the organization of a civic space incorporating Greek citizens of diverse origins, identifications, and affiliations. Likewise, the monumentalization of Roman-era Antioch generated an integrative civic topography distinguishing the Roman imperial city from that of Seleucid times. While speculative, the Seleucid civic topography plausibly materialized in a piecemeal fashion as successive monarchs added quarters to Seleucus I's

¹³ The theater's bronze inscriptions recording Jewish civic privileges certainly accomplished this. Josephus, *BJ* 7.104–6.

¹⁴ At Antioch, bronzes sometimes bore Latin legends. Burnett (2002) 119–20.

original settlement.¹⁵ During the first century CE, however, Roman emperors collaborated with local elites to erect monuments and colonnades. These colonnades contributed to Antioch's greater structural "harmonization," while porticoes constituted transitional zones between public and private space and civic and domestic interests.¹⁶ Antioch's colonnaded streets therefore exemplified Rome's ability to transform Greek and Roman forms into symbols of authority and patronage for Greek audiences, with the collaboration of civic councils.

The colonnaded street typically attributed to the emperor Tiberius and the Jewish dynast Herod I is especially notable.¹⁷ It bisected the city, and it facilitated physical and visual access to Antioch's primary public spaces, attracting the gaze and movement of Antiochenes even if they dwelled on the city's margins or had lesser socio-political status. Late antique sources indicate that it sported a column and statue dedicated to Tiberius, most likely honorific monuments that the *boulē* had bestowed upon Tiberius for his civic benefactions. Overall, the colonnade constituted the central organizing principle for the first-century city, which Tiberius had perhaps expanded by finishing the Epiphania quarter and a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus at the city's eastern edge.¹⁸ After the earthquake of 115 CE, the colonnaded street undoubtedly continued to structure the movement of the city's cultic processions and festivals and demonstrate the benevolence of Antioch's Roman patrons. By honoring Tiberius and other Roman benefactors for their generous building projects, the civic order affirmed the legitimacy of Roman authority, but it also replicated a symbolic field rendering Roman supervision an instrument of Antioch's Greek civic life.

Accordingly, if Roman intervention structured Antioch's urban topography, the Greek *boulē* charged it with meaning and provided a context in which Roman symbols assumed significance. It did so by commemorating Roman benefactions with inscriptions and statuary and by incorporating the material features of Roman patronage into Greek civic performances. For instance, it added Roman deities to Antioch's traditional civic pantheon, including the imperial cult, and it integrated Augustus' birthday into the civic-cultic calendar.¹⁹ It conducted festivals and processions, such

¹⁵ Will (1997) 101–4; Leblanc and Poccardi (1999) 124–26. ¹⁶ Cabouret (1999) 128–44.

¹⁷ Josephus, *BJ* 1.425; *AJ* 16.148; Cabouret (1999) 134–36. Herod paid for the pavement of the colonnaded street, Tiberius for the columns and ornament.

¹⁸ Cabouret (1999) 134–36; Sartre (2001a) 664, whose primary source is John Malalas, 9.14–18 (222–25), 10.8–11 (232–36), 10.18 (243), 45 (260–61), 10.50 (263) discusses imperial monuments.

¹⁹ Butcher (2003) 124–25, 370–71.

as those of the Olympic games, and these frequented colonnades adorned with statues of Roman emperors, and filled a theater and eventually a hippodrome built through Roman patronage.²⁰ The *boulē*'s strategic use of buildings, public spaces, and a civic calendar therefore elicited historical narratives that aligned Antioch's Roman present and Seleucid past. The monumental topography and the civic rituals of the city emphasized a history of continuous Greek citizenship patronized by imperial benefactors, Seleucid and Roman. Such was Antioch when Trajan arrived in Syria. When his successors and the *boulē* rebuilt it after the earthquake of 115, they demonstrated how Roman benefactors and civic elites ensured their Greek city's perpetuity.

These processes also had significant socio-economic implications. The councilors' irrigation of the countryside, their collection of various tributes from peasants, the markets that they created by sponsoring regional games, and their maintenance of colonnaded streets and public spaces helped stimulate the agricultural production and commercial activity that characterized this period. The imperial administration's empowerment of councils and organization of public roads that connected Antioch to its hinterland and peer polities, along with its settlement of veterans in the hinterland, bolstered the civic council's capacity to promote regional social interaction, economic ties, and irrigation by harnessing material and human resources. Despite the councilors' exploitation of peasant labor, the urban community and countryside benefited from these trends for centuries, as the population boom and prosperity of the "dead cities" on the limestone massif southeast of Antioch illustrate. Increased agricultural production, denser social networks, and the organizational abilities of the civic council cohered in ways that engendered prosperity and civic solidarities. Such prosperity and solidarity mitigated internal ethno-cultural tensions as the Antiochenes negotiated the terms of their imperial situation with Roman power-holders. Amid such processes, Antioch's Greeks rendered Roman intervention an integral component of their civic wellbeing and integrated Roman idioms into their transforming expressions of Greekness. As the next section shows, the epigraphic habit of Apamea paints a similar picture.

Apamea: under the colonnade

Apamea, a Seleucid foundation also called "Claudia" under the Romans, possesses epigraphic and material remains that illuminate certain features

²⁰ The Augustan-era Olympic games are recorded by John Malalas, 9.20 (224–5). Downey (1961) 168; Sartre (2001a) 664.

of its imperial Roman disposition.²¹ These include a vast colonnaded street, one in part reconstructed by archaeologists, and inscriptions commemorating Apamea's rebuilding after an earthquake. These remains reflect the cultural tensions wrought by the pressures of Roman imperialism and the infusion of Roman idioms into Apamea's Greek civic fabric. Yet, they also show how Apamea's civic authorities generated monumental spaces and narratives of civic Greekness integrating Roman or Italian symbols. Through them, the Apamenes framed their city as an autarchic self-governing unit even while enduring the intervention of Roman imperial agents, who were framed by civic ideologies as having enriched the city's innovative expressions of Greekness.

While Trajan was wintering in Antioch in 115 CE, an earthquake devastated Apamea, and it is therefore hard to capture the city's nature before the disaster. Afterwards, the *boulē's* members rebuilt the city, organized the public topography, and reaffirmed the core values of citizens and elites. The earthquake, perhaps destroying a Seleucid-era *stoa* on the main *cardo*, led to massive rebuilding.²² Lucius Julius Agrippa, a leading civic councilor and a Roman citizen, funded vast building projects in Apamea's northern section. As two inscriptions show, he built a bath complex, the basilica that it contained, and components of the vast colonnade along the *cardo* before it. A statue and its Greek-inscribed base commemorated his contributions. Although one inscription and therefore its author's identity do not survive completely intact, its inscription was certainly produced by Apamea's *boulē*. It references how Agrippa's ancestor Dexander had been honored by "our city through the decree of the council and people" and was therefore raised by a collective claiming to represent the corporate interests of Apamea and valuing the council's previous history in issuing decrees.²³ Along with the *boulē's* inscription, Agrippa left his own, proclaiming that "Lucius Julius Agrippa, son of Gaius, of the Fabian tribe . . . dedicated [these works] to his fatherland."²⁴

Both these inscriptions honored Agrippa as an exemplary benefactor before a civic audience. While commemorating his specific building projects, they also celebrated how he had provided grain for citizens, water

²¹ J. Balty (1969); Balty and Balty (1972); J.-Ch. Balty (1994) represent excavations. J.-Ch. Balty (2000) discusses "Claudia."

²² Balty and Balty (1977) 123–28; J.-Ch. Balty (1994), (2003) 232–34.

²³ The inscription was found in the baths along the central colonnade in the city's northern sector. Rey-Coquais (1973) 42–43=Choix 3. Rey-Coquais (1973) 40–41, 49–51 and Choix define the inscription as a decree of Apamea.

²⁴ Rey-Coquais (1973) 40–41=Choix 2. This inscription (found redeployed) decorated the lintel of the monumental gate into Agrippa's baths.



Figure 5. The central colonnade of Apamea. Facing north.

for aqueducts, and bronze statues of Greek mythical figures for the baths.²⁵ The council's inscription further noted that Agrippa had held "magisterial positions," which included numerous terms as archon, priest, *grammateus* (civic secretary), and *agoranomos*.²⁶ It mentioned that Agrippa was a descendent of Dexander, a local "tetrarch" or dynast who had acquired Roman citizenship under Augustus. This Dexander had held the priesthood of Augustus and Rome, and he had been "grand priest," perhaps of the Syrian *koinon* and the imperial cult.²⁷ Because Agrippa's family had for so long befriended the Roman people, as bronze tablets on the Capitoline hill of Rome attested, he was exempt from liturgies. But empowered by his extraction of agrarian wealth, he performed them anyway.²⁸

In the decades that followed, various benefactors lined the entire *cardo* with a colonnade. While replacing a Hellenistic predecessor, their colonnade completed the work that Agrippa had initiated north of the agora²⁹ (Figures 5–6). Although details of their contributions are largely unknown, they were probably produced by civic elites like Agrippa who erected monumental structures accessible to a citizen audience. The colonnade

²⁵ Agrippa's inscription, lines 7–12; the council's, lines 5–23.

²⁶ The council's inscription, lines 6–8. ²⁷ Rey-Coquais (1973) 48, 63; Millar (1993a) 261–62.

²⁸ The council's inscription, lines 2–6, 29–36; Agrippa's, lines 6–9.

²⁹ J.-Ch. Balty (1994); (2003) 232–34; Hellenistic colonnade.



Figure 6. The central colonnade of Apamea. Facing north.

spanned the entire city and constituted a vector directing gazes and movement from the city's periphery to key civic areas. One such area, the *agora*, was during the second and third centuries CE filled with honorific statues and inscriptions that the *boulē* had dedicated to Roman imperial administrators or imperial families.³⁰ By producing such material objects, civic councilors determined the framework in which citizenship was conceptualized and performed, and their accretion of individual benefactions organized civic spaces over time. Elites made their monuments visible to the entire civic population, and their structures, such as colonnaded streets, encouraged interaction between citizens and public buildings. In exchange for their benevolence, they received public honors situated at visible spaces in the urban terrain to which they had contributed.

³⁰ Van Rengen (1972) 103–5 presents three such inscriptions. The *agora's* further organization, the dedication of imperial statues by the *boulē* and *dēmos*, and the honorific monument for the governor C. Ummidius Quadratus at the north gate are described by J.-Ch. Balty (1988) 92; Balty and Balty (1977) 125–28; J.-Ch. Balty (2000).

The *boulē*'s use of honorific inscriptions and statues thereby affirmed its status as an institution of elites and generated experiences of a discrete community of citizens who were recipients and spectators of elite benefactions. Its epigraphic practices also situated individual competition for honor before citizen gazes, and these compelled public benefactors to organize the urban topography in ways that made benefactions, honorific statues, and inscriptions more accessible to citizens dispersed throughout a broad civic landscape. In this sense, the statue and inscription that the *boulē* erected, the inscription of Agrippa, and his contribution to the baths and central colonnade were intimately connected products of this context of performance, this moral system that civic councilors collaborated to build. In fact, numerous of Agrippa's clients imitated the civic council's initiatives by erecting statues and inscriptions in his honor near the council's inscription, and they did so for a citizen audience casting active judgment. These deeds reflected the prestige of Agrippa and his clients, who had fulfilled an ethical obligation by honoring their benevolent patron.³¹

Such euergetic performances were sustained by imperial patronage. Both inscriptions commemorating Agrippa's achievements stressed this when they contained dedications "to the health of the emperor Trajan" and references to the legatorial tenure of Julius Bassus. They did so when they cited the imperial honors granted to Agrippa's ancestor Dexander, which were inscribed at the Capitoline in Rome, and Agrippa's Roman citizenship and association with the Fabian tribe.³² Such deeds of civic generosity justified the privileged status of these citizens in their communities and in the Roman empire, and they enabled civic councilors, who often possessed Roman citizenship, to negotiate with Roman authority figures on behalf of their civic community. Roman patronage and citizen elite initiatives, for instance, probably sustained the renovation of the theater located on Apamea's southeast end.³³ Accordingly, many Apamene civic councilors such as Agrippa had Roman citizenship, maintained meaningful interactions with Roman elites, and cultivated Roman idioms. While they claimed to promote their city's wellbeing, their integration into a Roman land-owning aristocracy and their bonds with Roman authorities

³¹ Rey-Coquais (1973) 44–45. Consoles along Apamea's central colonnade held the statues.

³² Agrippa's inscription (lines 1–7, 13): the emperor, governor, and ancestors; the council's (lines 5, 29–39): ancestors.

³³ An inscription honoring C. Julius Severus, governor of Syria in 132, indicates that he conferred benefactions upon Apamea. Similarly, local notables erected statues of Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Lucius Verus at the agora's east entrance. J.-Ch. Balty (1988) 92–93. Finlayson (2012) represents recent work on Apamea's theater (309 for rebuilding).

often prompted conflicts of interests at their city's expense.³⁴ Still, despite their ties to Rome, such civic elites did not conceive of Apamea collectively as a Roman city. Instead, it was a Greek city whose *politeia* was sustained by, and dependent on, the patronage of the Roman emperor, his surrogates, and local elites who were often Roman citizens. Agrippa had therefore "dedicated" his benefactions "to his fatherland," but he used the symbols of Rome in his competitive strategies with other elites to demonstrate his local importance. In such ways, he and other councilors had dis-embedded Roman symbols from their previous contexts of signification to demonstrate their elitism, and Agrippa performed his benevolent deeds in part for a non-elite audience that was to witness, judge, and ascertain his superiority over peers. If Agrippa was Roman and Greek by self-definition, the prerogatives that he exercised benefited a discretely Greek citizen body, which was the primary audience of his benefactions, honors, and markers of Greek and Roman authority.

The euergetic activities of councilors like Agrippa had significant socio-economic effects, and they bolstered the material production and demographic surge that Roman imperialism in general underpinned. Along with Agrippa's grain donations, Apamea's peer polity interactions, civic solidarities, and organized civic landscape generated commercial incentives contributing to economic activity and population growth. On the limestone massif between Apamea and Antioch, local inhabitants exploited the infrastructure that the Roman administration and civic council regulated to bring their products to Apamea's colonnaded streets and *agora*, where Syrians from various communities congregated. The massive and enduring rebuilding projects that occurred after 115 CE also benefited skilled artisans and daily laborers. Like Antioch, Apamea hosted regional games attracting athletes and enterprising merchants. Being implicated in Syria's peer polity network, Apamene councilors organized space, time, and movement in ways that stimulated commercial exchange on local and regional scales.

Yet, the ideological and performative framework that such building projects generated should also be stressed. The central colonnade and its nearby complexes, built in part by Apamea's Roman citizens, had profound effects on Greek civic performance in Apamea. The city's cult processions and civic festivals frequented a colonnade and theater that were salient features of Roman imperial Greek *poleis*, and the basilica and baths, built by Agrippa and facilitated by Roman patronage, were also visible symbols of Roman rule. Roman idioms, however, were not alone in contributing to

³⁴ For this issue generally, Ando (2010).

Apamea's innovation expressions of Greekness. The *boulē* also interwove Near Eastern symbols into Apamea's Greek civic life, and some time after Roman intervention, it apparently extended citizenship to ethnic Syrians or "Arabs" or at least integrated Near Eastern idioms into its civic fabric.³⁵ A partially intact inscription found west of the colonnade and essentially at the city's center constituted a dedication made by Aurelios Belios Philippos, who was a priest to "the greatest holy god Belos."³⁶ The presence of the Babylonian god Bel shows how the Apamenes assimilated Near Eastern idioms into its citizens' Greek civic life, and the *trianomina* (three names typical of Romans) of Bel's priest further demonstrates meaningful connections to Roman, Near Eastern, and Greek culture. In fact, while being the priest of "Belos," Philippos was also the "head" (*diadochos*) of the Epicureans in Apamea.³⁷ Further evidence ties this cult of Bel to the city's *Tychē* and the good fortune of those who visited Bel's oracle. A bilingual Greek and Latin inscription on an altar dedicated in Gaul by a certain Sextus, who had consulted the god, classified Bel as the "ruler of fortune."³⁸ Within the symbolic field generated by local elites, the Apamenes had transformed their veneration of the Mesopotamian god Bel into a form of Greek civic performance, and they had connected the god to the city's *Tychē*, its fortune.

Trajan was residing in Antioch when the earthquake of 115 struck, and he did not live to see Apamea revitalized. After his death, councilors restored Apamea, directed sight and movement by building the colonnaded street, distributed food, commemorated deeds of fellow councilors with public inscriptions and statues, and promoted a civic-cultic calendar including festivals and processions for Bel. By doing so, they exerted cultural hegemony over Apamea and generated experiences of community and hierarchy among its citizens. For this reason, the council's benefactions and their commemoration had been publicized, for an audience of Apamenes to witness.

Greek Gerasa, "Arab" Antioch (Figure 7)

Trajan never visited Gerasa during his eastern itinerary, and Gerasa was not as "classically" Greek as Antioch at Daphne. After 106 CE, Gerasa was

³⁵ An inscribed pillar (126–27 CE) found in the later Basilica of Photios was dedicated by the *epimeletos(ēs)* Salmaios, who had an Aramaic or Arabic name. *SEG* 37.1413; Negev (1991) 64.

³⁶ Rey-Coquais (1973) 66; Smith (1996) 120. Septimius Severus' veneration of Apamea's Bel may explain why Apamea was renamed *Antoneinoupolis* under Caracalla. *IGLS* 4.1346; Balty and Balty (1977) 130.

³⁷ Smith (1996) 124–27 (with suggested date).

³⁸ *IGR* 1.14 = *IGF* 87; J. Balty (1997) 793–94.

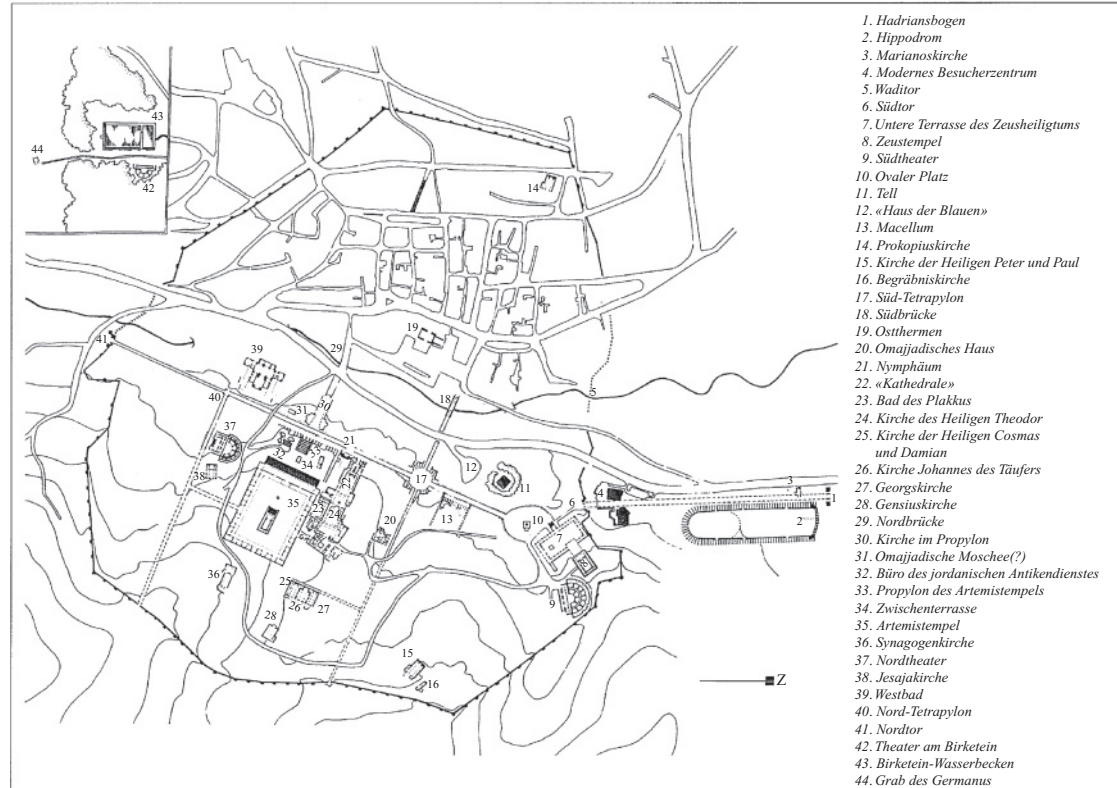


Figure 7. Plan of Gerasa. Seigne (2002) 6, fig. 2.

no longer even in the Syrian province(s). It was in the province of Arabia and therefore a polity of the Roman imperial Arabian *ethnos*, a cognitively experienced regional and social collective defined in civic (not ethnic) terms. But Gerasa's cultural composition under Trajan and his successors still merits examination; its Greek inscriptions and material culture complicate standard conceptions of Greekness. Located at the threshold of Roman Syria and Arabia among its sibling cities of the "Decapolis,"³⁹ Gerasa's civic fabric interwove the cultural idioms of Syrians and of those whom Roman administrators and Greek authors deemed ethnic "Arabs" or Nabataeans.⁴⁰ This section therefore examines the integration of Syrians and those often etically deemed "Arabs" into Gerasa's Greek citizen body. It also evaluates how colonnaded streets and other public monuments facilitated civic cohesion, but without treating Gerasa's urban organization comprehensively.⁴¹ Finally, it explores how civic authorities produced an epigraphic and monumental context that embedded diverse constituents into a coherent experience of civic Greekness, one that integrated Near Eastern idioms and intersected with civic Arabness.

Gerasa had a Seleucid-era existence, but little is known about it or whether it housed a Greek settlement.⁴² Roman-era Gerasenes called their city both Gerasa and Antioch (on the Chrysorhoas), which perhaps suggests a Seleucid foundation. A Hellenistic-era hilltop sanctuary was on the south end of the future Roman imperial-era city; an altar and eventually a temple, as an inscription attests, were raised there. Also, certain streets probably preceded the Roman-era grid.⁴³ Seleucid Gerasa is otherwise obscure, but after Pompey's intervention in the 60s BCE, the Roman administration treated Gerasa as a Greek *polis*, and its civic body probably integrated ethnic Greek, Syrian, and "Arab" elements.⁴⁴ By the second century, Gerasa possessed a gridded street network, architecturally elaborate sanctuaries to Zeus and Artemis, and many monumental features that characterized Greek *poleis* of the Roman imperial era.⁴⁵ It was by then part of the Roman imperial Arabian *ethnos* and its peer polity network.

³⁹ Lichtenberger (2003); Schmid (2008); Freeman (2008) treat the archaeology and coins of Hellenistic/Roman Jordan and south Syria.

⁴⁰ Whether the Nabataeans or inhabitants of Roman "Arabia" deemed themselves "Arab" by ethnicity remains controversial. Healey (1989); Hoyland (2001) 70–74; MacDonald (2009). Schmid (2008) 360–88 treats Nabataean material culture.

⁴¹ Raja (2012) 137–89 provides this. ⁴² Raja (2012) 148–49.

⁴³ Seigne (1997) 994–97; Schmid (2008) 354–56; Raja (2012) 148. Gatier and Seigne (2006): inscription.

⁴⁴ Similarly, Lichtenberger (2008) 138–51 (esp. 151).

⁴⁵ Raja (2012) 138–42, 156: street network.

Because Gerasa reached its socio-economic peak under Roman rule, this period provides the best epigraphic and material evidence for Gerasa's civic life, monumentalization, and cultural heterogeneity. Such evidence demonstrates that a *boulē*, including Syrian or "Arab" elements, generated the discursive and performative framework in which Greek civic identification was articulated. Likewise, Gerasa's civic terrain assumed Roman imperial features and imported sculptures. Gerasa's elites fashioned bonds with the imperial administration and engaged in Roman cultural performances. But the Gerasenes integrated such activity into the framework of a Greek civic collective. Individual Gerasenes could be Roman, wear togas, and inhabit a civic terrain filled with Roman idioms and imported statuary. They could have Aramaic, Arabic, or otherwise "Semitic" names. They could worship divinities with Arabic names and perhaps aniconic forms. Their city was still Greek.⁴⁶

One of Gerasa's earliest surviving Greek inscriptions affirms that a *boulē* existed by 10 CE.⁴⁷ It also establishes the existence of imperial cult worship, and it celebrates a priest's contribution to construction at the sanctuary of Zeus. It therefore shows how the *boulē* integrated Roman idioms and symbols of Roman patronage into Gerasa's civic-cultic rituals. These trends persisted. Subsequently, a certain Zabdion served as the imperial cult's priest and subsidized construction at the same sanctuary of Zeus.⁴⁸ Two gymnasiarchs replicated Zabdion's donations there with nearly identical inscriptions two decades later.⁴⁹

These inscriptions show that the *boulē* regulated Gerasa's priestly and civic offices and that magistrates often funded construction at the sanctuary of Zeus. As elsewhere, the *boulē* constituted a class of wealthy landowners with relatively equal resources and prestige. By the second century CE, they sat collectively on the north theater's right-hand side during civic assemblies, an arrangement that distinguished the councilors from members of the *dēmos* organized into *phylai* (civic tribes) while reinforcing their institutional solidarity.⁵⁰ Such elites also shared a competitive framework in which they held civic offices and, as inscriptions attest, performed benefactions

⁴⁶ Kennedy (2007) explores Gerasa amid numerous eras and imperial systems. Kennedy (1998); Friedland (2003), especially 435–36, treat Gerasa's "Romanization" and its material forms. Zayadine (1986); (1989) contains 1980s excavations.

⁴⁷ Gatier (2002) 278: from the lower court of Zeus' sanctuary.

⁴⁸ Welles (1938) no. 2. Zabdion's name is of Aramaic or Arabic origin (Harding (1971) 294; Negev (1991) 24), but his father was named Aristomachos and (perhaps) his brother Ariston (no. 3). Seigne (1985) 292, n. 17 emends date to 26/27 CE.

⁴⁹ Welles (1938) nos. 3–4 (after 42/43 CE).

⁵⁰ Agusta-Boularot and Seigne (2004), esp. 523–26; Retzlaff and Mjely (2004) 37–48; inscriptions in the *ima cavea*.

explicitly for social *homonoia* (concord) while holding them. The *boulē* had thereby generated a field of signification in which elites competed for civic offices and used their resources and connections to adorn Gerasa's highly visible parts.⁵¹

During the first century CE, the sanctuary of Zeus benefited most from councilors' collaborative, yet competitive efforts to earn honor before a citizen audience. In fact, on an architecturally refined block found (reused) in its lower terrace, a late Seleucid Greek inscription (perhaps Gerasa's earliest) describes its god as Zeus of the (*h*)*ammana*, the transliteration of an Aramaic term (*hmn'*) for a sacred chapel. The inscription therefore indicates that the sanctuary had a Hellenistic-era temple whose (*h*)*ammana* held a cult statue; previously, the sanctuary probably housed only altars.⁵² But during the first century, the benefactions of civic magistrates or priests, as described previously, shaped various phases and permutations of the sanctuary's main temple and its terraces. Citizens and residents, too, noticeably participated in this context of competitive benefaction. A certain Diodoros, son of Zebedos, described himself as the architect of the temple's (lower) terrace in 28 CE. Around 70 CE, a certain Theon funded a new temple's construction while claiming that he was a suppliant.⁵³ Several dedicatory inscriptions, although fragmentary, record benefactions of councilors and citizens over the following century. These produced a new upper terrace and its massive *peripteros* temple by 163 CE.⁵⁴ Citizen benefactions perhaps also facilitated the oval plaza that connected Zeus' sanctuary to the urban landscape.⁵⁵ All told, over a century of benefactions established a sanctuary that perhaps suffered destruction during both Jewish revolts and endured numerous permutations or rebuilding. But its final product interwove Greek and Near Eastern architectural and artistic traditions, and within a Greek civic context.⁵⁶

Onomastic evidence suggests that many gymnasiarchs, councilmen, or citizens who contributed to the city's urban landscape possessed ethnic

⁵¹ Welles (1938) nos. 45–46 (from 66/67) documents the offices of archon, *dekaprotos*, *proedros*, *grammateus*, and *epimeletēs*.

⁵² Gatier and Seigne (2006), esp. 178–82. Seigne (1997) 996–97; (2002) 13–14; Eristov, Seigne *et al.* (2003): Hellenistic temple. *PAT* 0263=*CIS*, 2.3, 3917=*IGLS* 17.1.23; *PAT* 0991, 1429=*Inv.* 10.145, 1608: *hmn'*.

⁵³ Welles (1938) nos. 5–6; Seigne (1985) 287–95. Theon apparently encountered severe danger in the first Jewish revolt; he was perhaps a resident alien. His dedication coheres with elite civic behavior. Rigsby (2000) 99–106. Gatier and Seigne (2006) 175: Theon's temple replaced the Hellenistic one.

⁵⁴ Welles (1938) nos. 7–11.

⁵⁵ Raja (2012) discusses the plaza's architectural role.

⁵⁶ Seigne (1992) 185–95; (1997) 998–1000 discusses destruction and construction. Ball (2000) 336–45; Kraeling (1938) 18–19, 336–45 compare the final temple to others from Roman Syria.

“Arab” or Syrian genealogies or were otherwise from civic Greek families that cultivated Aramaic or Arabic names.⁵⁷ The increased frequency of Aramaic or Arabic names among the Gerasenes could indicate a shift in naming patterns, but it also may highlight a transformation in who was earning Greek citizenship. This transformation, in turn, could have prompted the popularity of Aramaic or Arabic names among Greeks. Similarly, by the second century CE, the civic pantheon of Gerasa or the gods of Gerasene families included “Arab” divinities. Several inscriptions, one of which a priest of Dionysus dedicated, reveal that Gerasenes venerated the “Arabian god” (*theos Arabikos*), perhaps Dusares.⁵⁸ In similar ways, an *archibōmistēs* (apparently connoting an overseer of an altar) administered the cult of Pakeida in a temple dedicated to Hera, and, judging from his title, he maintained his altar and temple as a civic official and priest.⁵⁹ Yet, as ethnic Syrians and “Arabs” increasingly earned Gerasene citizenship, they joined Greek civic tribes named after Greek gods or Roman emperors and assembled in the north theater accordingly.⁶⁰

By the late second century CE, the increased presence of citizens of ethnic Syrian or “Arab” origin and the inclusion of local symbols in a Greek civic terrain were thereby intimately connected to the production of Gerasa’s urban topography. The council’s hegemonic authority stimulated forms of elite and citizen competition that strongly impacted the civic terrain. In some cases, the city or the council officially produced such buildings and monuments, but in others magistrates, citizens, or groups of artisans financed parts of a monumental building, temple, portico, or colonnade, and they commemorated their benefactions with inscriptions or were honored with inscriptions and statues by clients.⁶¹ Along with benefactions to Zeus’ sanctuary, numerous inscriptions record contributions to the temple of Artemis, the (west) *propylon* and fountains of the first terrace approaching

⁵⁷ Seigne (1985) 287–89; Gatier (1982) 274–75, (1985) 308–10, (1995) 115–16; Welles (1938) nos. 15, 54, 74. These include Diodoros, son of Zebedos; Theodoros, son of Barnanaios; Marion, son of Phallion; Ameros, son of Ragelos; Malchos, son of Demetrios, son of Malchos; brothers named Demetrios, Malchaïos, and Marsos; a fuller named Zabdion; and three archons named Maron, son of Abbibos, Gamos and Malchaïos. Harding (1971) 7–8, 75, 166, 271, 294, 536, 542, 564–65; Negev (1991) 13, 25, 27, 39, 41, 60 provide possible roots.

⁵⁸ Welles (1938) nos. 20–22; Gatier (1982) 272–74 (for hinterland). On coins of Adra’a, Dusares was the aniconic “god of the Adraēnoi.” Spijkerman (1978) 60–61 (nos. 1–3); Kaizer (2008d) 5.

⁵⁹ Welles (1938) no. 17. No. 18 is also dedicated to Pakeida. The title *archibōmistēs* perhaps suggests the veneration of a rock altar.

⁶⁰ Agusta-Boularot and Seigne (2004) 523–26; Retzleff and Mjely (2004).

⁶¹ In the small markets behind the *cardo*’s colonnade, numerous columns were funded by skilled artisans working in the agora, including potters, merchants, and bronze workers. Goicoechea (1986) 19–26, 33–38; Lazzarini (1989) 41–49.

her sanctuary, and the south theater.⁶² Similar second- and third-century benefactions also produced and later expanded the north theater, which served “polyvalent” uses as an assembly space and an odeion, the hippodrome, and perhaps baths.⁶³ Gerasa’s street grid and colonnades probably benefited in such ways too.⁶⁴

Such activity reflects how elite Gerasenes consciously competed before a citizen audience, and it indicates that the *boulē*’s acts of euergetism, institutional intervention, and epigraphic activity structured their competition. The council’s collective benefactions and individual citizen competition fed the formation of a cohesive urban topography within which colonnaded streets, tetrapyla, and the arch for Hadrian leading to Gerasa’s south gate produced “repeated signage” connecting the “civic and sacred monuments of the city”⁶⁵ (Figures 8–9). These conduits yielded access to the temple of Artemis, a central feature of Gerasa’s grid pattern, from the city’s periphery, and they also housed shops and connected public spaces that stimulated movement and thereby commercial activity.⁶⁶ Accordingly, the colonnaded streets of the city granted visual and physical access to Gerasa’s central civic spaces and cult sites, thereby promoting connectivity and inclusiveness among Gerasa’s inhabitants. They created an urban topography structured for the consumption of all *politai*, regardless of ethnic lineage, cultural variation, and location within the city.

The socio-economic prosperity that the civic council’s hegemonic faculties and Gerasa’s civic framework generated also merit emphasis. Many occupational *collegia*, and individual artisans plying their trade in the *agora* or along the colonnades, imitated civic councilors by making material benefactions to the civic topography. Potters and merchants donated columns

⁶² Welles (1938) nos. 27–29, 51–52, 60, 62–63, 72–73, and perhaps Seigne (2009), which revisits Welles (1938) nos. 40, 109. Brizzi, Sepio, and Baldoni (2010) date the road leading to the temple of Artemis and its east *propylon* to the second and third centuries. Raja (2012) 175–80 provides detail and analysis.

⁶³ Agusta-Boularot and Seigne (2004) 488–546, 555–57 examine the dedicatory inscriptions of the *scaena*, the *ima cavea*, and statue bases. Seigne and Agusta-Boularot (2005), reevaluating Welles (1938) nos. 65–68 with new finds, analyze the north theater’s phases. Despite the lack of epigraphic evidence, many benefactors perhaps contributed to the hippodrome, water supply, and public baths during the second century. Ostrasz (1989) 71; Seigne (2008); Raja (2012) 164–68 give dates. Borkowski (1989) presents inscribed altars dedicated in the hippodrome.

⁶⁴ Raja (2012) 138–42, 156: street network is likely second-century.

⁶⁵ Wharton (1996) 65; March (2009) 60–112 treat connectivity, symbolism, and the human experience of Gerasa. Raja (2012) 180–89 discusses the phases of urban organization and their significance. Seigne (1999) 836 notes how Artemis’ sanctuary aligned with the street grid. Welles (1938) no. 58: inscription of Hadrian’s arch; nos. 30, 143–45: his visit.

⁶⁶ Parapetti (1989), (2002); Raja (2012) 176–98, with bibliography, discuss Artemis’ sanctuary. Inscriptions and coins (Welles (1938) nos. 27–29, 32; Spijkerman (1978) 158–59, nos. 1–8) show that Artemis was a main Roman-era divinity and perhaps even Gerasa’s *Tychē*.



Figure 8. The northern tetrapylon of Gerasa, from the southwest.

to the *agora*, as did a bronze-smith. A *collegium* of fullers called the “Great Artemisiakon” apparently performed rites to Artemis and maintained her sanctuary.⁶⁷ This economic prosperity was not limited to urban sectors. This period exhibited sustained population growth and increased agricultural activity in the countryside in ways mirroring the situation in the Hauran to the northeast.⁶⁸ As had occurred in many parts of Syria, Gerasa’s civic life and participation in a peer polity network, along with Rome’s tributary structure, stimulated the maintenance of infrastructure, spaces, irrigation, and capacity for movement that incited food production and commercial activity.

⁶⁷ Goicoechea (1986) 33–34; Gatier (1982) 274–75, (1985) 308–10: undated (but Roman imperial) inscriptions. Retzliff and Mjely (2004) 40–41 present an inscription of linen-workers who gathered in the north theater.

⁶⁸ Kennedy (2007) 85–100, 120–21 (Gerasa and environs); Villeneuve (1985–86) (Hauran). Moors (2002) examines relationships between *poleis* and villages. Graf (2001) treats the rural economy in regions of modern Jordan. Kennedy (2007); El-Khoury (2009) present recent survey work in northwest Jordan and Gerasa’s vicinity.



Figure 9. The central colonnade of Gerasa, from the south.

Even after Gerasa earned the status of *colonia* in the third century, however, such processes did not compel the civic topography to attain ideal dimensions of symmetry or completion.⁶⁹ Many buildings at Gerasa were unfinished or followed more local patterns. Despite the implementation of colonnades, the city never fulfilled an entirely orthogonal plan.⁷⁰ The massive colonnade never possessed a frieze or a cornice, and walkways constructed behind the city's central colonnades had awnings or matting but no roofs. In addition, the city's hippodrome was poorly built, and after it collapsed during the chaotic period of the third century, it was used for manufacturing purposes and to house refuse materials.⁷¹ Despite all this, the city's temples, colonnades, and monuments still facilitated innovative expressions of civic Greekness. They indicate how Greek civic life could

⁶⁹ Welles (1938) nos. 179, 191: colonial status.

⁷⁰ Some colonnaded *decumani* (streets oriented east-west), for instance, do not form a right angle with the central *cardo*. The temple of Zeus does not align with the Gerasa's general layout, and the road leading west to the sanctuary of Artemis may be Gerasa's more ancient central "decumanus." Seigne (1997) 1002–3; (1999) 835–37; (2002) 9–12.

⁷¹ Kennedy (1998) 60–63. Lepaon (2008) 68–69 posits "hybrid" forms of baths and bathing.

include more local forms, and they advertised the city's prestige, created social vectors, and produced civic cohesion mirroring that of other polities in Roman Syria and Arabia.

By such means, the Gerasenes generated a discursive and performative framework and restructured diverse cultural symbols in ways that produced new expressions of Greekness and of local identifications. These cultural forms enabled them to fulfill the demands of Greek citizenship while cultivating certain Near Eastern idioms, perpetuating local ethnic and social categories and networks, and differentiating themselves from the Greeks of classical cities. The intersection of such categories of identification and group affiliation enabled Gerasene citizens to engage in "Greek" and "Arab" civic performances and to maintain ethnic or cultural ties to other Greek citizens or ethnic "Arabs," whether villagers or nomads. As a Greek city of the Arabian *ethnos*, Gerasa's civic council had so structured the categories of "Greek" and "Arab" that their points of overlap promoted civic solidarity, not ethnic fragmentation, within a diverse civic body.

Conclusion

Despite variations, academic treatments have mostly framed Greekness as a universal constant and have anticipated "authentic" Syrianness (or even Arabness) to be an ethnic formulation pegged to Near Eastern culture. Such expectations overlook how Roman imperialism and its patronage of Greek *poleis* transformed "Greek," "Syrian," and "Arab" into civic markers that defined intersecting social categories. Scholars have therefore not fully acknowledged how classical Greek idioms could be integrated into Syrian or Arab social expression. It is notable that Syria maintained diverse regional cultures, with variations in elevation, climate, and distance from the Mediterranean affecting the level of "assimilation" to Greek norms. But scholars have not reckoned how such regional diversity also encapsulated the vast spectrum that varying expressions of Greekness and its Syrian or Arab counterparts inhabited.

The cities of Antioch, Apamea, and Gerasa exhibited many classical Greek cultural forms during the Roman imperial period, and Greek dominates their epigraphic records. But their integration of certain Roman and Near Eastern idioms into expressions of Greekness constitutes a reminder that "Greek culture" was not merely a static phenomenon. Also, the fact that Greek language possessed overt prestige and therefore appears in inscriptions does not preclude varying uses of Aramaic among citizens or in routine civic practices. As civic councils underpinned processes of cultural

hegemony within Greek civic landscapes and amid prosperous conditions, they transformed how Greekness was constituted and who could participate in Greek citizen discourse and performance, but with Greek widely harnessed as a language of material display, whether public, domestic, or funerary. Accordingly, even if the Greek civic cultures of Antioch, Apamea, and Gerasa primarily integrated classical Greek idioms, it must be stressed that they also domesticated Roman signs. Moreover, at Gerasa in particular, citizens reinvented “Greek” onomastic patterns and integrated “Arab” divinities into Greek civic life, even while maintaining Greek as their primary epigraphic language. Finally, Plutarch’s Antiochene Alexander, who introduced this chapter, shows that if Syrians reckoned Greek a language of overt prestige for epigraphic use, they could still cultivate Aramaic as a quotidian language of practical Greek citizenship, along with all its Syrian ethnic or social connotations. Through such interwoven symbols, Syrians expressed both Greekness (membership in a network of peer Greek polities) and non-Greekness (distinctiveness from classical Greeks through reconstituted Near Eastern practices).

This chapter has explored Greek *poleis* whose civic cultures incorporated many classical Greek idioms that characterized Roman imperial *poleis*. In this vein, the following two chapters examine Greek civic systems whose cultural expressions deviated sharply from classical standards. These are Palmyra and Dura-Europos, two cities of Rome’s eastern steppe frontier. Their relative isolation, location on imperial margins, commercial ties to central and south Asia, and their position on a dry steppe, induced forms of social practice and cultural expression that differed from those of Greek polities in Syria or the eastern Roman empire at large. Despite this, the inhabitants of these settlements crafted Greek civic cultures and peer polity connections to Syria’s *poleis*. If Antioch and Apamea demonstrate how Greek performance could accommodate Roman imperial domination and its idioms, Palmyra and Dura-Europos show how Near Eastern culture could inform and shape Greek practices.

CHAPTER SIX

Hadrian and Palmyra *Constrasting visions of Greekness* *(first to third centuries CE)*

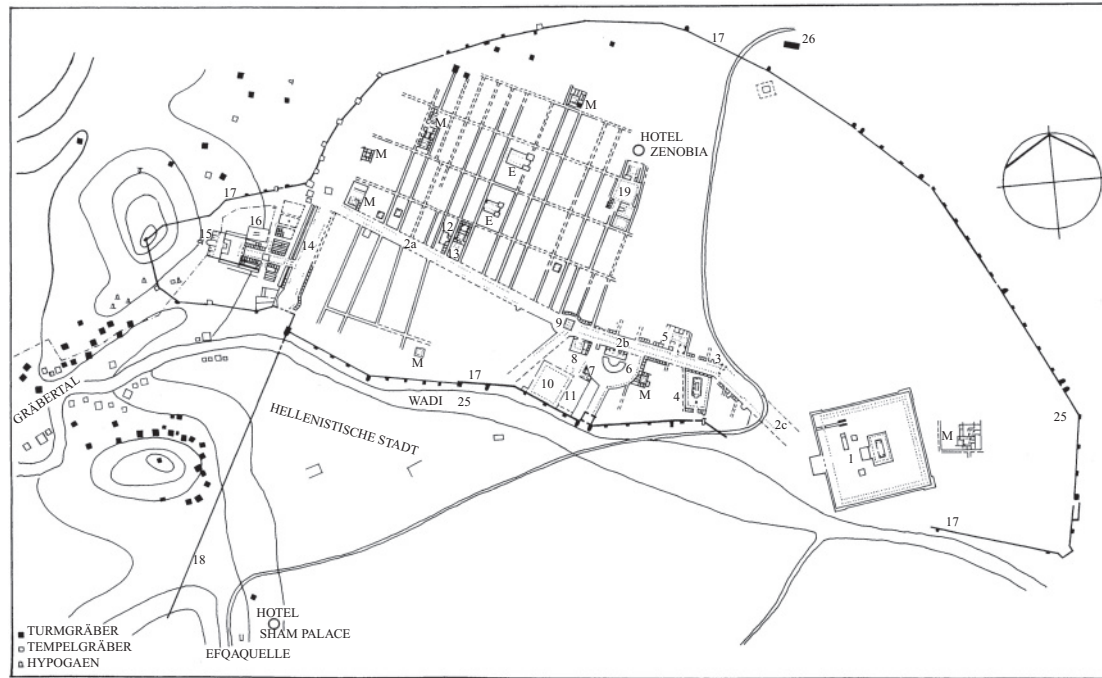
During his reign, the emperor Aelius Hadrianus reaffirmed the cultural centrality of Athens and classical Greece.¹ In 130–31 CE, he completed the temple of Zeus Olympius in Athens and founded a league of Greek cities called the Panhellenion. The Greeks of this league built a temple and founded games in his honor. Hadrian, a former archon of Athens, also presided over the Greater Dionysia in Athens while wearing Greek garb.² Hadrian's patronage of this age-old festival linked him to classical Greece's exalted past. This link was enhanced by Hadrian's completion of the temple of Zeus Olympius and nearby projects expanding Athens eastward. An arch at the threshold of the old city and new quarter therefore reported in an inscription on one side: "this is the Athens of Theseus, the earlier city." But on the other side, another inscription stated, "this is the [Athens] of Hadrian, and it is not the city of Theseus."³ Hadrian, Rome's famous *Graeculus* (Greekling), had succeeded Theseus in patronizing Athens).

If Athens was foremost in Hadrian's affection, it was not the only community with a Greek *politeia* that he governed or visited. Amid his famous treks to the empire's farthest corners, Palmyra, a settlement of mostly Aramaic-speakers, was also apparently on Hadrian's itinerary (Figure 10). But its Greek civic life did not conform to the cultural standards that Athens or many other Roman imperial Greek *poleis* in more classical territories represented. As previous chapters have stressed, some of Syria's most notable cities generated new and creative expressions of Greekness amid the demands of Roman imperialism. As Syrians became Greek citizens, and as civic councils exercised cultural hegemony through material contributions and their ideological structuring of key cultural symbols, these Roman or Near Eastern idioms were integrated into Greek civic expressions. In many

¹ Anderson (1993) 6 notes that Antonine emperors were uniquely "favorable" to Greek culture.

² Cass. Dio, 69.16.1–2. Boatwright (2000) 144–57 discusses Hadrian's benefactions to Athens.

³ IG 2².5185.



Palmyra. Übersichtsplan (nach M. Baranski / A. Ostrasz) 1: Belheiligtum, 2: Große Säulenstraße, 3: Bogentor, 4: Nabuheiligtum, 5: Diokletiansthermen, 6: Theater, 7: «Senat», 8: «Caesareum», 9: Tetrapylon, 10: Agora, 11: Annex der Agora, 12: Basilika, 13: Peristylhaus, 14: «Transversalkolonnade», 15: Principia des Diokletianslagers, 16: Allatheiligtum, 17: Diokletiansmauer, 18: Frühe Stadtmauer, 19: Baalshaminheiligtum, 25: Arsutempel, 26: Museum, E: Kirchen, M: Peristylhäuser.

Figure 10. Plan of Palmyra. al-As'ad and Schmidt-Colinet (2005b) 8, fig. 7.

ways, Palmyra, which Aramaic-speakers called Tadmor, represents the most unique manifestation of this process. While exhibiting substantive continuities in Near Eastern material culture and epigraphic formulae, it also housed cults to numerous Near Eastern divinities. It is convincing, if hypothetical, that it maintained dimorphic social structures. Its uniqueness, in part engendered by its remote and dry location, has triggered debate over whether it constituted a Greek *polis*.⁴ Palmyra's cultural complexity, among its other traits, has in fact recently prompted scholars to regard it as "oriental," as exemplifying unique local cult practice, as reflecting "creolization," or as epitomizing "mestizaje" and movement between parallel cultural universes.⁵ These approaches generally premise that Palmyra was not a Greek *polis* or that at least certain of the Palmyrenes' practices were antagonistic to Greek civic life.

Such arguments have illuminated the complexity of Palmyrene society and its cultural expressions, but as the introduction and previous chapters state, they also premise that Greek and Near Eastern cultural categories were universal constants. They therefore preclude discussions of how Palmyrenes could produce innovative expressions of Greekness and express their own local variant of Syrian civic culture, or Syrianness. This chapter contributes to this scholarly discussion by arguing that Palmyrenes produced innovative forms of Greek *politeia* prioritizing Near Eastern idioms and socio-cultural continuities. In other words, they performed Greekness in ways that flaunted Palmyrenean Aramaic (hereafter "Aramaic" or "Palmyrenean") as a language of Greek citizenship and recast dimorphic social structures and kinship networks as components of a Greek civic system. They meaningfully participated in the social life of the network of Greek peer polities that formed the core structuring principle of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*.

The Palmyrenes' creative Greek expressions contrast with dominant trends that contemporary Roman authorities and Greek elites exhibited elsewhere. As many scholars have emphasized, Greek sophists of this period located Greek performance in their imitation and innovation upon classical Greek traditions. Part III discusses this trend and its implications for contemporary Syrian literature. For now, it should suffice to state that many

⁴ Sartre (1996) classifies it as a Greek *polis* because its authorities adopted the nomenclature for Greek civic offices. But Yon (2002), Kaizer (2007), Sommer (2005b), among others, offer critique.

⁵ Yon (2002) 57, 233–35; (2004) 319–21; "Semitic" or "oriental" notable families and their political influence; Sartre (2008) 41–43; mestizaje and parallel cultures; Sommer (2005a) 25–28, 170–224 and (2005b): creolization, dimorphism, kinship networks, and clientage; Kaizer (2007): uniqueness of cult and coinage.

Greeks residing in classical Greek regions and the “un-classical” territories that Alexander conquered embraced this vision and located their Greekness in their emulation of classical trends or, in certain instances, their possession of Greek ethnic lineage. Roman authorities likewise deemed this definition of Greekness the most legitimate and facilitated its replication materially and ideologically. The emperor Hadrian, a famous philhellene, exemplifies such activities.

Despite these trends, the Palmyrenes, who did not claim Greek ethnicity, generated a civic Greekness that was patently un-classical and that challenged the definitions of Greek sophists and Roman authorities. By examining the inscriptions and, when relevant, the monumental layout, cultic and funeral architecture, and visual culture of Palmyra, this chapter establishes two poles on a spectrum of possibilities for how subjects could enact and perform Greekness. One involved reconstructing and engaging a Greek classical past just as Hadrian, Roman authorities, and Greek intellectuals did. The other involved producing forms of Greekness that integrated Near Eastern “barbarian” idioms.

Mapping Greekness: Hadrian’s Greek cities

Hadrian’s favorable treatment of Athens, noted above, contrasts with his oppression of Jerusalem. This contrast illuminates how Hadrian viewed the Roman empire’s cultural map of legitimate Greekness. In the decades prior, Jerusalem had endured the Roman administration’s persistent hostility toward the defunct Jewish temple, and as described previously, the continued integration of Jews into Greek civic communities had stimulated tensions, anxieties, or contestations among Jews of varied religious inclinations in the province of Judea. Shortly before founding the Panhellenic League, Hadrian expelled all Jews from the city. He repopulated it with Roman colonists and renamed it Aelia Capitolina to honor himself and his divine counterpart Jupiter Capitolinus, the Roman manifestation of Zeus Olympius. The city’s name and the tendency for Roman colonists to build Capitoline temples indicate that Hadrian established a cult of Jupiter Capitolinus within the new city’s boundaries.⁶ Many Jews resisted Hadrian’s transgression, and the bloody Bar Kochba revolt

⁶ Cass. Dio, 69.12.1–2 claims that Hadrian built a temple of Jupiter Capitolinus on the temple mount, but this could be the quotation of the eleventh-century epitomizer Xiphilinus. Eliav (1997) 125–44; (2005) 84–92 posits another location for the Capitoline temple. Boarwright (2000) 196–203: Aelia Capitolina’s foundation.

began (132–35 CE).⁷ Although the destroyed temple's priestly hierarchy had been dispersed, Simon bar Kochba's followers fought to preserve Jerusalem for the Jews. Like their priestly predecessors, they endeavored to eradicate the idolatrous images that the Roman imperial system imposed upon the city. When they minted new coin issues on imperial *denarii*, they therefore stamped over images of Hadrian and the divinity Justice with aniconic images of grapes and lyres. They also effaced the coins' Latin legends and added Hebrew inscriptions reading "Simon" and "for the Freedom of Jerusalem."⁸ Yet, after three years of bloodshed, Hadrian's legions prevailed. Jerusalem became the Roman colony of Aelia Capitolina, and statuary adorned its landscape in ways that made it resemble Greek and Roman civic communities.⁹ Hadrian had accomplished two feats that had thwarted Antiochus IV three centuries earlier. He had completed the temple of Zeus Olympius in Athens, and he had ensured his patron divinity's veneration in Jerusalem.¹⁰ The Jewish temple remained in disarray, ethnic and cultural tensions persisted in the new province of Syria Palestina that Hadrian formed shortly after and scrupulous rabbis thereafter navigated the presence of statuary on Israel's soil.¹¹

Despite his passion for Greek culture, Hadrian did not re-found Jerusalem as a Greek *polis* but settled it as a Roman veteran colony. Hadrian's decision deviated from those of imperial predecessors. These had sparingly established Roman colonies in Syria or Judea, but Aelia Capitolina was Hadrian's only secure eponymous foundation. Likewise, Hadrian's Panhellenic League, which amplified a previous league organized under the Julio-Claudians, included select classical cities that sent representatives to games and festivals.¹² Membership in the Panhellenion was determined by the legitimacy of a city's collective Greek culture and its classical genealogy.¹³ Hadrian especially admired the ancient Greek pedigree of Cyrene, one such member.¹⁴ As a result, most the league's cities were located in Achaia, the western coast of Asia Minor, the Greek islands, or Cyrenaica. Peripheral regions, such as Macedonia, Thrace, and the

⁷ Goodman (2007) 484–92; Eshel (2006) provide analysis and debates.

⁸ Meshorer (2001) 274a; *RIC* 2, Hadrian nos 214–15: denarius (?). Example image accessible through the Classical Numismatic Group, Inc. at www.cngcoins.com/Coin.aspx?CoinID=60544 (12/6/2011).

⁹ Eliav (2005) 209; (2008) 626–27. The Roman colony was established northwest of the temple mount, thereby giving Jerusalem a northwestern orientation. Eliav (2003) 254–65.

¹⁰ Similarly Breytenbach (1997) 380. The Ephesians treated Hadrian as a manifestation of Zeus Olympius. *AE* (1990) 906.

¹¹ Mishnah, *Avod. Zar.* 1.7, 3.4 (for statues in baths).

¹² Van Nijf (2001) 334: athletic competition and Greekness; Oliver (1989) 69–79: the Julio-Claudian Panhellenic league.

¹³ Spawforth and Walker (1985) 82. ¹⁴ Boatwright (2000) 175–77.

hinterland of Anatolia directly east of Ionia, only furnished members who had “proven” their cities’ classical origins. The league included no cities that Alexander and his successors founded in Syria, Egypt, or the interior of Anatolia.¹⁵ This vision of the Greek past as centered on the Aegean contrasted with the more “Macedonian” past remembered in the Near East.¹⁶ Except for *poleis* that opposed what the Panhellenion represented, all other excluded cities faced illegitimacy.¹⁷ They possessed mimic Greeks, fake copies of originals that were not quite Greek.

Hadrian did not frame authentic Greekness by patronizing the Panhellenion alone. The Greek polities that he established amid his travels also illuminate this issue. When Hadrian became emperor in 117, he completed the Roman military’s withdrawal from Parthian territory that Trajan had perhaps initiated.¹⁸ Subsequently, he sojourned throughout the empire’s frontier regions to make administrative changes. Amid his travels, Hadrian established numerous Greek cities in the eastern Roman empire, and his establishments show that he associated “classical” regions with authentic Greek culture. In Mysia, for instance, he (re-)founded four eponymous cities: Stratonicea-Hadrianopolis, Hadrianoutherae, Hadrianoi, and Hadrianeia.¹⁹ By building such cities, Hadrian virtually mapped the division between his Greek world (with Ionia to the west) and eastern “barbarian” regions in the interior of Anatolia.²⁰ Hadrian only once founded a Greek city in a “barbarian” region. He established Antinoöpolis in Egypt where his lover Antinous had drowned and labeled its citizens “New Greeks.”²¹

The Greek civic foundations of Hadrian illuminate how the Antonine emperors shared the widespread viewpoint of Greeks who dismissed the legitimacy of Greek culture in Syria. While Hadrian’s travels delineated the Roman empire’s frontiers, his Panhellenion and his civic foundations reflected his definition of the Greek world that these frontiers protected. Like many sophists, Hadrian limited legitimate Greekness to Greece, Cyrene, and western Asia Minor because he believed that such cities had “purer” ethnic Greek lineages or more “classical” cultural practices. Hadrian’s perceptions were influential in part because his power stabilized an imperial system in which inhabitants of classical lands and

¹⁵ Spawforth and Walker (1985) 80–82, 90–91. ¹⁶ Spawforth (2006) 7–12, 16–26.

¹⁷ Swain (1996) 75–76; Romeo (2001); Doukellis (2009) 289. Many key cities of Asia Minor did not join despite having the correct qualities. Spawforth (1999) 350–52.

¹⁸ *TEAD* 7–8, no. 868=Teixidor (1987) 188–89 (116–7 CE) perhaps marks Trajan’s evacuation of Dura-Europos.

¹⁹ Boatwright (2000) 184–90. ²⁰ Synnada’s status is doubtful. Jones (1996) 49–50.

²¹ Boatwright (2000) 193; *OGIS* 709=*IGR* 1.1070; Zahrnt (1988) 705.

sophists had pre-eminence over other Greeks. "The one who has thirty legions is more learned than all."²²

As emperor, Hadrian did not neglect Syria. While visiting Syria during his imperial tour to the east, he granted metropolis status to Damascus, Tyre, and Samosata, which became the central cities of the regional *koina* of Coele Syria, Phoenicia, and Commagene.²³ He reorganized the Syrian *ethnos* into two provinces: Syria and Syria Palestina, and he may even have granted Palmyra an eponymous title.²⁴ Hadrian perhaps also built the temple of the Nymphs in Antioch, in which he erected a statue of Zeus holding a globe.²⁵ Still, Hadrian at best considered Syrian cities to be distortions of authentic Greek communities. Syria was a militarized province separating the classical Greek world from the barbarian threat looming east of the Euphrates. Its Greek cities had to be protected, patronized, and supported. Yet, for Hadrian Syria was culturally marginal, a frontier that defended the glory of classical Greece.

Hadrian's Palmyra and its cultural tensions

As the section above argues, Hadrian and many Greek or Roman contemporaries valued classical Greek culture, and they therefore deemed Syria a barbarian landscape. The Greek civic order of Palmyra surely appeared eccentric or illegitimate to Hadrian. He visited Palmyra in 129 CE while touring the eastern provinces. To celebrate the event, the Palmyrenes apparently assumed the name *Hadrianoi*. While the Palmyrenes expressed affinity for their emperor, Hadrian had little in common with them. The Palmyrenes' adaptation of classical Greek and Italian forms, which they interwove with Near Eastern idioms, produced cultural expressions deviating from Hadrian's classical ideals. In fact, the Palmyrenes' "indigenous" modes of social organization and cultural practices have prompted scholars to dismiss the idea that Palmyra was a Greek city.²⁶

Before exploring such adaptation and innovation, it is relevant to stress another issue that Hadrian's visit to Palmyra encapsulated: cultural tension.

²² *HA Hadr.* 15.12, allegedly stated by the sophist Favorinus.

²³ *HA Hadr.* 14.1. Bowersock (1985) 75–77 doubts Hadrian's contempt for Antioch and attributes his reforms to administrative concerns. *BMC Galatia* 117–18, 283, Pl. 16.8, 34.8; *BMC Phoenicia*, 259–68, Pl. 31.14–32.6 (Tyre had claimed the title of metropolis before this).

²⁴ *PAT* 0305 = *CIS* 2.3, 3959 = *IP* 10 = *IGLS* 17.1.145 celebrates Hadrian's visit to Palmyra. *PAT* 0247 = *CIS* 2.3, 3902; *PAT* 1374 = *Inv.* 10.38 = *IP* 15 = *Agora* VI.04 = *IGLS* 17.1.245; *SEG* 34.1593; Waddington (1870) no. 2440.

²⁵ John Malalas, 11.14 (278); Boatwright (2000) 137–39.

²⁶ Sommer (2005b) 285–86; Kaizer (2007) critique Sartre (1996), who defines Palmyra as a Greek *polis*.

If Hadrian embodied imperial governance and emulation of Greek and Roman classical traditions, his visit to Palmyra mirrored the prevailing cultural tensions with which Palmyrenes and other such Syrians contended. Like many provincials, the Palmyrenes mediated between their own ever-changing local cultural forms and the cosmopolitan Greek and Italian forms that Roman imperial pressures disseminated throughout the empire.

Such mediation and negotiation, as manifested in inscriptions, architecture, and visual art, were complex. The Palmyrenes' civic culture embodied internal tension and the ability to transform it into components of civic cohesion. As Rome intensified its control over the eastern steppe, Palmyra was already interweaving Aramaic and Arabic cultural and religious strands, along with Parthian and Persian ones. A distinct "Arab" presence pervaded the Palmyrenes' onomastic patterns, and certain Arabic loan words that refer to various types of social organization entered the Palmyrenes' dialect of Aramaic.²⁷ Such "Arab" idioms perhaps enabled the settled inhabitants of Palmyra to forge and maintain bonds with nomads of their dimorphic environment, bonds defined by kinship and reciprocity between settled populations and local nomads in places insufficiently stabilized by arable farmland.²⁸ Likewise, alongside apparently local divinities such as Iarhibol, Aglibol, Malakbel, and Agbel, the religious life of Palmyra and its hinterland incorporated deities worshipped by inhabitants of ancient Syria and Mesopotamia and "Arabs."²⁹ These included Baal-shamin, Nebo (Nabu), Allat, Atargatis, Arsu, and Bel, the last of whom the Palmyrenes conflated with their local god Bol.³⁰ Despite the internal tensions that such different cultural strands represented and the possibility that kinship groups affiliated with certain cult sites, no strong evidence substantiates the premise that discrete groups worshipped different divinities based on ethnic premises. Instead, while these gods indicate that diverse Aramaic, "Arab," or Near Eastern presences informed the settlement's cultural components, these presences fashioned kinship bonds, developed communal standards, reconciled differences, or otherwise cohered.

²⁷ Taylor (2002) 318; Yon (2002) 87–98, with bibliography. For example, *gbl'* (assembly, community) is the Arabic *jubl* (crowd). *Phd* (clan, tribe) is *faḥd* (subdivision of a tribe). The Palmyrene equivalents of Ali and Zubayd (Olaies/'*hy* and Zebeidos/'*zbyd'*) appear in the Tariff Decree. Stark (1971) 86, 105–106. Gnoli (2007b) 171–78 emphasizes cultural complexity. Yon (2002) 262 contains Persian/Iranian names at Palmyra.

²⁸ Sommer (2005a); 95–97, 176–83; (2005b).

²⁹ Kaizer (2002) 124–48; Schlumberger (1951) 13–22, nos. 2–29=*PAT* 1664–93; sanctuary for Agbel at Khirbet Semrin.

³⁰ Kaizer (2002) 67–124, 153–54.

The cultural pressures embodied by Hadrian, Roman imperial domination, and the intensification of Greek polity networking in Syria added further complications to Palmyrene cultural performance. Palmyrenes responded to such pressures by integrating Greek and sometimes Latin into their public and honorific inscriptions, in which Aramaic was otherwise most commonly featured. They also interwove “cosmopolitan” Greek and Roman artistic and architectural conventions with their own ever-transforming local styles. It is therefore worth exploring how Palmyra’s inscriptions, architecture, and art reflected and even reproduced the cultural tensions of a desert city within which idioms of Roman imperialism, Greek civic life, and local traditions converged, often to produce new forms of culture.

The linguistic differences that Palmyrene discourses internalized constitute indelible markers of cultural tension. The settlement was overwhelmingly Aramaic-speaking, and it is unclear to what extent Palmyrenes spoke Greek.³¹ The inscriptions of Palmyra nonetheless indicate that Aramaic and Greek were written and read by some Palmyrenes, and they both possessed overt prestige in varying contexts. They also illustrate how Greek or Aramaic usage could highlight significant cultural difference. Bilingualism in inscriptions or alternating employment of Greek or Aramaic in different contexts, for instance, constituted visible and material embodiments of the cultural tensions lingering in Roman imperial Palmyra. The Palmyrenes generally commissioned inscriptions in Greek or in both Greek and Aramaic to commemorate public decrees and honor patrons, caravan leaders, or euergetic benefactors. By contrast, funerary inscriptions or those produced in contexts framed by kinship bonds or pious cult activity were typically in Aramaic, although some were bilingual. Hypogea could contain burial niches for hundreds of people bearing kinship connections or bonds of clientage, and these tombs, including the “Tomb of the Three Brothers,” sometimes featured Aramaic inscriptions over the entrance.³² Such discrete contexts of language use highlight how Palmyrenes deemed Aramaic a language of kinship and religious piety even as they adopted Greek for “public” display or civic matters. They even suggest that Palmyrenes treated Aramaic as a “high” language conveying overt prestige.³³ In sum, Aramaic speech and writing, with Arabic onomastics, distinguished the

³¹ Taylor (2002) 318. Palmyrenes who knew Greek probably learned it through formal education, not domestic usage.

³² Sommer (2005a) 193–201; (2005b) 296 treats tombs, *necropoleis*, and social structures.

³³ Sommer (2005a) 117, 121–23 examines “overt” and “covert” prestige and Palmyrenean as an *H-variety* language with “overt prestige.” Taylor (2002) 317–24 in depth.

Palmyrenes from many (but not all) civic Greeks of Syria, and so did their dimorphic ties to nomadic clans.

The material presence of bilingual inscriptions embodied cultural tensions even as they became integral features of civic performances and euergetistic activity. For instance, in 131 CE, Palmyra's civic council erected an honorary statue to the recent *grammateus* Males, son of Iaraios (*ml' br yrhy*), for providing oil to citizens, soldiers, and foreigners during Hadrian's visit to Palmyra in 129 and for financing the construction of the temple of Baal-shamin. The inscription was bilingual. The Greek inscription included Males' Roman name of Agrippa, but the Palmyrenean did not. Instead, it included the name of his paternal ancestors in ways that emphasized kinship and clan connections, not civic markers.³⁴ In an example of "dynamic" equivalence, the Greek version merely mentioned a temple of "Zeus," whereas the Palmyrenean version stressed Males' piety toward Baal-shamin and Durahlun. In short, the inscription's presentation of two different languages and their distinctive points of emphasis created a material manifestation of cultural tension for those who could read or recognize its scripts.

Such Aramaic and bilingual displays framed the Palmyrenes as pitted against the cultural trends of Syria's network of peer Greek polities. It paradoxically did so even as Palmyrenes were being integrated into this network and were selectively adopting and adapting its linguistic, architectural, and artistic idioms. Perhaps the Palmyrenes never resolved the cultural tensions represented by their disparate language usages even as they built a stable civic order and coherent community. Yet, it must be remembered that language difference, despite its material disruption of communication, does not always inform conscious ethnic or social division, especially in imperial or post-imperial formations.³⁵ While Aramaic-speaking Palmyrenes could cast their unique cultural practices and social structure as antithetical to those of Syria's network of Greek city-states, they also could frame them as innovative expressions of Greekness in ways that situated them within this peer polity network. Their collective cultures were in this sense both Greek (expressing membership in a peer polity network of Greek cities) and anti-Greek (antagonistic to the network's mainstream culture).

³⁴ *PAT* 0305=*CIS* 2.3, 3959=*IP* 10=*IGLS* 17.1.145. Taylor (2002) 322–23 discusses differences between the Greek and Palmyrenean versions, and *PAT* 0247=*CIS* 2.3, 3902 contains similar differences. Males' name appears Arabic in origin. Stark (1971) 65; Harding (1971) 562; Negev (1991) 39.

³⁵ In northeast India, many Nagas speak the language of their rival Kukis. Baruah (2005) 12. Nugent (2000) examines similar situations in imperial and post-imperial Ghana.



Figure 11. The temple of Bel, from the southwest.

Palmyrene temples and funerary architecture exhibit and illuminate similar cultural tensions. As Roman intervention escalated and Palmyrenes accumulated wealth through the caravan trade, key elite leaders financed the construction of temples made of limestone, framed by porticoes, and endowed with immense decorative refinements shaped by Greek or Italian precedents.³⁶ Yet, the inner room (*cella* or *naos*) of these temples maintained chambers (*adyta* or *thalamoi*) preserving the space in which a mud-brick chapel, or *hmn'*, had previously housed cult likenesses, which typically consisted of reliefs, not freestanding statues.³⁷ In this sense, the interiors of temples maintained many “traditional” elements consistent with those of other temples in Syria, as opposed to classical Greek or Roman temples.³⁸ In their own ways, the temples of Bel, “Nebo,” Allat, and Baal-shamin integrated previous mudbrick shrines by sporting an inner room yielding visual access to gods in a chapel³⁹ (Figures 11–12).

³⁶ Kaizer (2006b) stresses that Palmyrenes, not Roman magistrates, built or embellished temples.

³⁷ Kaizer (2002) 67–68, 80, 89, 102, 157–58, with bibliography. Gawlikowski (1997a); Freyberger (1997); Drijvers (1988) discuss *hmn'* as a divinity's residence. *PAT* 0263=CIS 2.3, 3917=IGLS 17.1.23; *PAT* 0991, 1429=Inv. 10.145, 1608.

³⁸ Dentzer (1989); Gawlikowski (1989): sanctuary and temple architecture in Syria. Gawlikowski especially explores how the *thalamos* (*adyton*) in the *cella* (*naos*) held cult images. Freyberger (1998) examines Syrian temples, while stressing cultural conflict.

³⁹ Seyrig *et al.* (1968–75): excavations of the temple of Bel. Kaizer (2002) 67–69 and (2006b) 95–96 describes Piertyzkowski's complex arguments on the temple's building phases. Collart and Vicari (1969): excavations of the temple of Baal-shamin. Bounni (1992–2004), esp. 2.15–20: excavations at the temple of “Nebo.” Gawlikowski (2008), with bibliography: the temple of Allat (full report pending).



Figure 12. The temple of Baal-Shamin, from the southeast.

The architecture of Palmyrene burial structures, whether hypogea, towers, or “temple” tombs, likewise embodied elements of cultural tension.⁴⁰ The exteriors of tower tombs, for instance, could have Greek or Roman refinements, but their interiors typically contained forms of burial organization and likenesses of the deceased that reflected extended clientage and kinship networks. The tomb of Elahbel follows this pattern⁴¹ (Figure 13). Likewise, in underground hypogea, frescos reflecting Greek stylistic conventions could display Greek mythological figures in the heroic nude, but sarcophagi could be located in prominent positions in ways that stressed the social standing of the tombs’ builders. Typically, images of the tombs’ founders held visible and prominent positions; they reclined on the lids of sarcophagi as though banqueting on *triclinia*. In many instances, they donned the trousers and tunic of caravan traders, and relatives occupying

⁴⁰ Schmidt-Colinet (1989), (1992), (2004a); al-As’ad and Schmidt-Colinet (2005a) 36–56: tombs and their sarcophagi. Yon (2002) 204–6: tombs and social status.

⁴¹ Colledge (1976) 83–84 (Figs. 56–57); DeGeorge (2001) 223–26; Yon (2002) 204–6; al-As’ad and Schmidt-Colinet (2005a) 39–41: the tower tomb of Elahbel. *PAT* 0486=*CIS* 2.3, 4134=*IP* 32=*IGLS* 17.1.407: inscription.

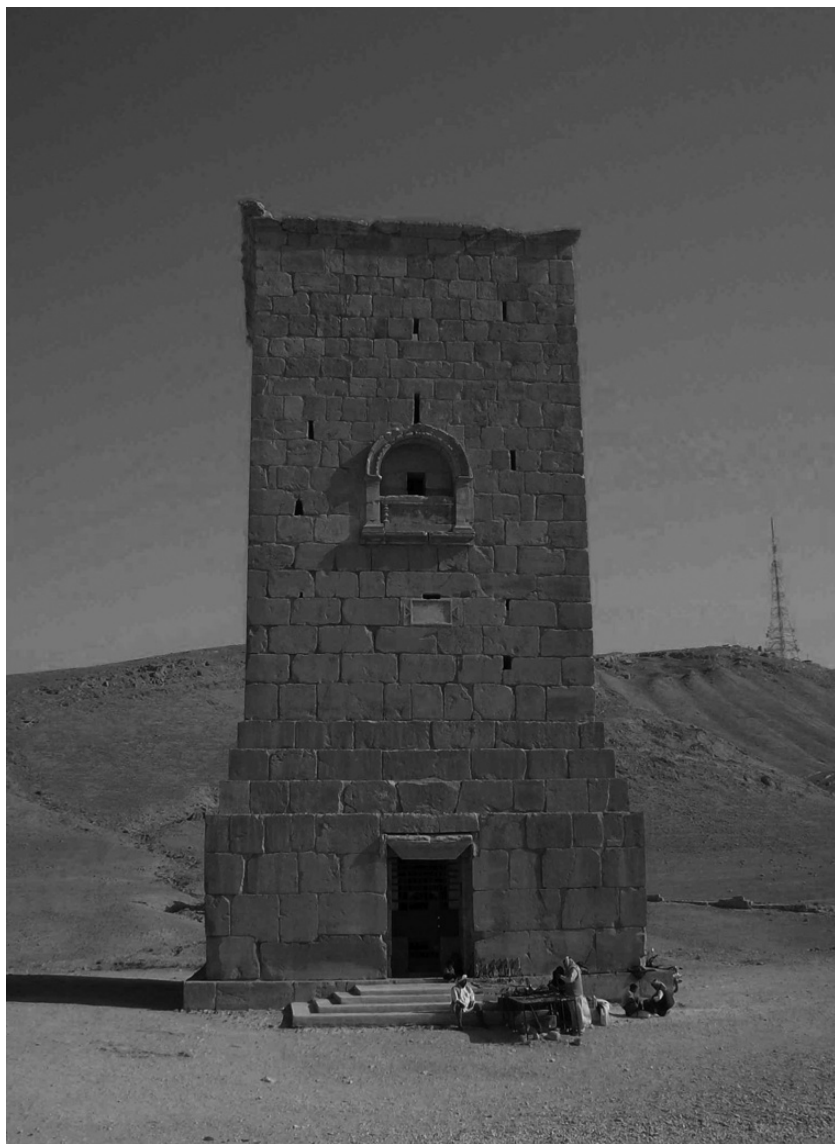


Figure 13. The tomb of Elahbel.

subordinate positions sometimes flanked them. The underground “Tomb of the Three Brothers” represents one manifestation of this pattern. The tomb’s entrance yields to a floor plan shaped like a “T.” To the right and left, chambers that contain hundreds of niches for the deceased reflect the extended kinship and clientage networks of Palmyrene social structure.⁴² Also accessible in both chambers are sarcophagi; some still display likenesses of the tomb’s founders or its deceased. Reclining on the lid as though on *triclinia*, they wear trousers and tunics. By contrast, on the central hall’s terminal wall, painted winged Victories support plaques featuring busts that variously bore Greek and more “local” costume. Above them a stylistically Greek fresco show Achilles disrobing female garb and leaving the daughters of Lycomedes as he joined Odysseus and Diomedes to fight at Troy. On this chamber’s ceiling, Zeus’ abduction of a nude Ganymede is also depicted.⁴³ In short, such tombs reflect how Palmyrenes could variously interweave diverse idioms highlighting the cultural tensions of their Roman imperial context.

Sarcophagi and frescos in tombs at Palmyra also illustrate how representational art cited and replicated cultural tensions. Such tensions could be manifested in choice of artistic style, the clothing and hairstyles of people or gods represented, and the cultural origins of myths displayed. Palmyrenes combined artistic features of diverse origins in seemingly limitless ways, but some options that Palmyrenes employed can be stated here. A notable sarcophagus, for instance, features the image of the deceased reclining on the lid in caravan dress, which included tunic, trousers, and turban, but on the sarcophagus’ front relief he wears a Roman toga while performing a sacrifice with togate members of his family⁴⁴ (Figure 14). “Antiochene-style” house mosaics that depict the Greek hero Bellerophon in Persian or caravan-style dress and a hunter in “Parthian” apparel elicit

⁴² Yon (2002) 197–232, esp. 218–22 discusses the “tribal consciousness” reflected by the organization of Palmyra’s *necropoleis*. While being buried with direct family, owners of tombs sometimes ceded spaces to remote relatives, friends, or clients. *PAT* 0039–59 (0056–57=*IGLS* 17.1.518–19), 0066–67, 0071–75, 0095, 0118 (*IGLS* 17.1.445), 1135 (*IGLS* 17.1.403), 1142–43 (*IGLS* 17.1.438–39) represent a few of many examples.

⁴³ Colledge (1976) 84–87 (Figs. 115–17); Degeorge (2001) 229–33; Butcher (2003) 326–27: “tomb of the Three Brothers” (with dates). *PAT* 0523–27=*CIS* 2.3, 4171–75 (*PAT* 0523 also=*IP* 33): inscriptions.

⁴⁴ Schmidt-Colinet (2009), with bibliography. Colledge (1987) 23–28; Butcher (2003) 270, 312–13; Schmidt-Colinet (2004a); Balty (1996); the catalogue of Sadurska (1994): sculpture. Schmidt-Colinet (1997) 161–65, Figs. 2, 4 discusses funerary reliefs, the above-mentioned sarcophagus, and their relevance for “re-orientalization.” Goldman (2001) 164–66 studies clothes at Palmyra, which could feature Persian/Parthian trousers and tunic, Greek *himatia*, Roman *togae*, or their combinations. Heyn (2010): gestures in funerary art.



Figure 14. Sarcophagus of deceased Palmyrene. Palmyra Archaeological Museum. Discovered by the National Mission under the chairmanship of Dr. Khaled al-As'ad.

similar tensions.⁴⁵ Many funeral reliefs displayed deceased men and women in Greek dress, but with Aramaic inscriptions commemorating them. In such contexts, Greek idioms could have connoted a cosmopolitan elitism wrought by conspicuous consumption and mastery of cultural forms inaccessible to many Palmyrenes. Yet, they also highlighted tensions produced by Roman imperialism and its dissemination of Greek and Roman idioms in Near Eastern regions.

Representations of divinities produced similar potential for difference. Frescos or mosaics depicting Greek myths could render gods or heroes according to naturalistic conventions reflecting Greek artistic tradition, but reliefs typically presented divinities, and oftentimes worshippers sacrificing to them, in more static two-dimensional forms.⁴⁶ This artistic style

⁴⁵ Gawlikowski (2005) 29–31. In the second mosaic, the mounted archer fights Persian tigers. Gawlikowski suggests that it depicts Odaenathus; its Aramaic inscription conceals an earlier inscription with the title *mr[n]*, which Odaenathus and his son Herodian (Hairanes) shared.

⁴⁶ Divine images were typically reliefs. Two exceptional free-standing statues in the temple of Allat (Athena) were probably imported after Palmyra's suppression in 273. Gawlikowski (2008) 409–11.

emphasized hierarchy through positional arrangement and distinctions of size; gods, for instance, often occupied central positions and were larger than the worshippers appearing on their flanks. Palmyrenes also were perhaps more inclined to represent Near Eastern myths than Greek or Roman ones in their temple art. Reliefs that adorned the peristyle of the temple of Bel displayed the epic battle between Bel and Tiamat that had originated in Babylonian myths. Because religious art did not incorporate the Greek motifs of honorary statues and tomb frescos, Palmyrenes had shaped a realm of cult performance that did not easily integrate classical or contemporary Greek and Roman traditions.

Such complexities of language, architecture, and art illuminate the tenacity with which Palmyrenes retained and adapted local practices as they negotiated Roman imperial pressure and its dissemination of Greek cultural idioms. This negotiation enabled the Palmyrenes to define and perpetuate kinship ties with the region's settled inhabitants and local nomads. Through their retention of Aramaic and localised forms of art and architecture, the Palmyrenes also perhaps forged a "spiritual" framework of signification that underwent internal transformations but enabled cultic, funerary, and domestic life to resist integrating idioms of Roman imperial-era Greek polities.⁴⁷ Within this framework, Palmyrenes acted as "not-Greek," as antagonistic to classical Greeks and even many other Near Eastern Greeks in their material practices, social structures, and cultic traditions.

But along with this "spiritual" framework, Palmyrenes inhabited a practical framework of signification through which they implemented Greek citizen performances embedding them in a Greek peer polity network. Although being activated at different times, this practical framework cohabited with the spiritual and occupied many shared spaces, including cultic, domestic, and funerary ones. Both frameworks often integrated the same idioms, such as Aramaic speech, while charging them with different meanings. As the following sections stress, it was through "non-Greek" behaviors that Palmyrenes crafted innovative expressions of Greekness as they anchored "non-Greek" practices in performative frameworks of euergetism, epigraphic discourses of honor, and civic topographies cohering

The reliefs of Athena-Allat that appear in Syria's interior, except certain cities of the Decapolis, often cohere with Palmyrene forms. Friedland (2008). Gawlikowski (2005); Kaizer (2011): Greek-themed or Greek-style mosaics.

⁴⁷ In colonial India, many Bengalis distinguished between the "material" domain of the "outside," that is, the statecraft, science, economy, and technology of the West, and the "spiritual" or "inner" that contained the "essential" marks of cultural distinctiveness. Chatterjee (1993) 5–6.

with those of Syria's Greek city-states. Amid such self-positioning, the thesis–antithesis of Greek/non-Greek operated within a field of signification that transformed this dichotomy into a foundational component of a Greek civic order comprised of diverse cultural forms.

This innovative Greek culture helped embed Palmyrenes in peer polity relationships with other Greek cities and framed their civic community as a Greek collective despite its deviations from classical norms. It stimulated them to erect funeral monuments that, although displaying local features and Aramaic inscriptions, were physically and conceptually connected to civic terrains.⁴⁸ It prompted Aramaic-speakers who dressed like Parthians to engage in the civic practices of a Greek “commonwealth” that a peer polity network constituted. It enabled tensions wrought by bilingualism and cultural hybridity to obtain synthesis within the constantly transforming formation of Palmyra's Greek civic order. While Palmyrenes could alternate between what they deemed Greek and “indigenous” modes of behavior, distinct Greek and “indigenous” subjects with dichotomized cultural traditions did not necessarily inhabit single bodies. Likewise, Greek and “indigenous” expression did not conform to alternate uses of Greek and Near Eastern culture as scholars normally define them. Even if Palmyrenes used Greek as a language of overt prestige in civic inscriptions, Palmyrenes still could have spoken Aramaic as they conducted matters of civic *politeia* and acts of euergetism or treated the role of caravan leader as a civic office without crossing perceptible cultural boundaries. In fact, the Palmyrenes' alternation between Greek and Near Eastern idioms was integral to their Greek civic performance, to their participation within a Greek collective embedded in a peer polity network. It was for such reasons that Palmyra's Greekness differed sharply from that which Hadrian and contemporary sophists cultivated. Palmyra therefore represents how polymorphous Roman imperial Greekness could be, and it shows how provincial expressions of Greekness could encapsulate and domesticate cultural tension.

Hadrian's Syria and the Palmyrenes

The famous “Tariff Decree” of Palmyra demonstrates how the Palmyrenes transformed the cultural tensions just described into the bedrock of their civic order and its collective Greekness. In 137 CE, shortly before Hadrian's

⁴⁸ De Jong (2010) 622–23 examines this feature at the necropolis of second-century Tyre and, more broadly, in Syrian cities.

death, the civic council of Palmyra issued a massive decree regulating the tariffs to be collected from merchants. This decree exemplifies how the Greek civic processes of Palmyra simultaneously referenced, internalized, and compensated for, the cultural tensions so prevalent in Palmyrene society. By Hadrian's reign, Palmyra's civic elites had crafted a Greek civic ethos and a *boulē* that exercised cultural hegemony over public life. The Palmyrene civic councilors and their citizens expressed an innovative form of Greekness contravening the "classical" version of Hadrian, the Antonines, and the sophists.

Inscribed in Greek and Palmyrenean Aramaic, the decree established formal regulations for the tariffs on trade items, but it also significantly records the mechanisms of civic authority that Palmyra's *boulē* exercised. Its bilingual opening lines delineated a civic structure consisting of Greek magisterial offices held by councilmen, such as a *proedros*, a *grammateus*, and archons, and these magistrates had names exhibiting a mixture of Greek, Aramaic, and Arabic influences.⁴⁹ As the decree stipulated, the archons and the *dekaprotoi* were to update the previous tariff decree and inscribe the old and updated law on a public stele.⁵⁰ The decree's bilingual inscription thereby exemplifies how civic councils of Roman imperial Syria interwove Greek and Near Eastern idioms to create localizing expressions of civic Greekness by the early second century CE.

The decree also indicates that the council exerted a regulatory force over the caravan trade, local trade, and slave trafficking. By imposing and collecting taxes on trade items, it defined local commerce as a civic matter contributing to the wellbeing of citizens, instead of disparate groups. The bilingual inscription recording the law states that the council was mediating a dispute between its tax collectors and local merchants, and it was posting in writing the previous practices, both written and unwritten, through which commercial taxes had been assessed.⁵¹ The inscription in such ways

⁴⁹ PAT 0259=CIS 2.3, 3913. The opening lines of the Greek and Palmyrenean (first parts each) described how Bonnes, son of Bonnes, son of Hairanes (*bwn' br bwn' br hyrn*) was *proedros* and Alexander, son of Alexander, son of Philopator (*'lksdrs br 'lksdrs br plptr*) was the *grammateus* of the *boulē* and *dēmos*. Malichos, son of Olaies (*mlkw br 'hyy*) and Zebeidos, son of Nesa (*zbyd' br nš'*) were archons.

⁵⁰ PAT 0259=CIS 2.3, 3913, lines (first part) 2–11 (1.1–10 in Palmyrenean Aramaic). The "first law" is the older tax law. Matthews (1984) 174–80 provides analysis. This decree is accessible in Greek, Palmyrenean, and English, with commentary, in Healey (2009) 164–205.

⁵¹ PAT 0259=CIS 2.3, 3913, lines 4–7 (first part). The Greek and Palmyrenean versions state that disputes arose between *emporoi* (*byny tgr'*), merchants, and *telōnes* (*byny mksy'*), tax assessors because in previous instances certain taxes were assessed according to written law, or *nomos* (*nmus'*), and others according to oral convention, or *synētheia* (*'yd'*). The council therefore issued a written law mandating all tax assessments.

generated and reaffirmed experiences of a Palmyrene community in which merchants and tariff collectors constituted discrete interest groups, and by enacting laws it ensured that the interests of the city's merchants, tariff collectors, and citizens intersected in ways diffusing potential conflict. In fact, while Palmyra's councilors were probably landowners who maintained domestic and transhumant herds and flocks, some perhaps were merchants and tariff collectors.⁵²

While elaborate, the tariff decree represents only one instance in which the civic council of Palmyra produced concepts of civic community and ethos through its hegemonic authority. The council in fact generated the perception that the *polis*' collective interests and those of its disparate groups and networks were coterminous. The council exerted moral authority because it inspired individual competition for honor among council members and citizens, and it did so by issuing public inscriptions and statues that honored citizens for their benefactions.⁵³ Elites, civic entities, kinship groups, or individual citizens in turn adopted the council's epigraphic tendencies to honor patrons who performed deeds of euergetism for the *polis*, certain groups, or clients. This process thereby stimulated contests for honor among individuals or families within the ideological matrix of the *polis* and situated them before a citizen audience. In this context, benefactions to the *dēmos*, its *politeia*, or specific citizens were how such status and prestige were garnered. The hegemonic mandates of the *boulē* so informed Palmyrenes' perceptions that they treated even patrons of caravans and caravan leaders (*synodiarchai*) as civic benefactors.⁵⁴ The honorific inscriptions that caravans, merchants, and the civic council dedicated to such men cast their activity as deeds of euergetism performed for their city's prosperity, even if they only directly benefited certain interest

⁵² Bang (2008) 196, 230–31. Schlumberger (1951) 129–34 concludes that notables produced habitations and cisterns in Palmyra's northwestern hinterland.

⁵³ The second-century decrees and dedications of the *boulē* were centered on the temple of Bel, Palmyra's primary cult center, but in the third century public inscriptions were raised farther west along the Grand Colonnade and in the agora. The council's activity: PAT 0260=CIS 2.3, 3914=IGLS 17.1.21; PAT 0273=CIS 2.3, 3927=IGLS 17.1.306; PAT 0276=CIS 2.3, 3930=IGLS 17.1.159; PAT 0277=CIS 2.3, 3931=IGLS 17.1.305; PAT 1375=Inv. 10.39=Agora V.01=IGLS 17.1.214; PAT 1378=Inv. 10.44=IP 16=Agora VI.18=IGLS 17.1.222; PAT 1387=Inv. 10.63=Agora IX.05=IGLS 17.1.215; PAT 1389=Inv. 10.69=Agora V.02=IGLS 17.1.218; PAT 1414=Inv. 10.114=Agora VI.05=IGLS 17.1.227; PAT 1421=Inv. 10.127=IGLS 17.1.225; Bounni (1992–2004) nos. 2 and 39, the second of which honors in Aramaic a *grammateus*. Agora V. and IGLS 17.1.16–22, 72–77, and 214–227 gather many inscriptions of the city/council from the agora, temple of Bel, and Grand Colonnade. Yon (2002) 249–50 compiles list.

⁵⁴ Young (2001) 151–56; Sommer (2005a) 202–213 treat the complicated roles of "patrons" and synodiarchs, who could invest in caravans' success.

groups.⁵⁵ Many precise functions of the *boulē* are unknown, and it may have represented a Greek realignment of an assembly of “tribal” elders.⁵⁶ Despite this, it created a discursive and performative framework in which experiences of civic community were produced and within which local notables, whose families exercised tremendous local influence, competed for status.

Since it was a discrete organization of notables operating with an institutional mentality, the *boulē* wielded a centralizing authority different from that of an assembly of elders, from which it was perhaps derived. Yet, the *boulē* was more than an institution; it was a class of elites possessing vast personal resources and their own complex and varied networks of kinship, patronage, and friendship. By promoting horizontal solidarity among such elites, the *boulē* crafted a hegemonic system through its official privileges and the complex constellation of personal relationships and commercial connections that it underpinned.⁵⁷ Palmyra may have been a dimorphic society in which urban dwellers and nomads sustained reciprocal arrangements through kinship ties, and its real or fictive kinship networks may have informed civic institutions indebted to Near Eastern paradigms.⁵⁸ But the civic *boulē*’s intervention structured the symbolic framework in which citizens operated, and it embedded Palmyra in the Greek peer polity network that constituted the core structuring principle of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*. The institution stimulated a discursive and performative framework of citizenship unparalleled in other contemporary dimorphic societies of the Syro-Mesopotamian steppe, including Hatra and Parthian-era Edessa.

Palmyra’s remote desert location and its relative lack of surrounding arable farmland helped shaped the context of dimorphic kinship previously described.⁵⁹ These environmental conditions and social relationships tempered and framed the extent to which Palmyrene civic structures could emulate those of other Greek cities in Syria. As frequent references to clans in inscriptions suggest, the settlement during the first century BCE constituted a confederation of kinship groups that spoke an Aramaic dialect

⁵⁵ Sommer (2005a) 207–13, by contrast, regards *synodiarchai* and caravan patrons as participating in patron-client relationships structuring a society not totally informed by civic institutions.

⁵⁶ Kaizer (2002) 49–50; Sommer (2005a) 217 observe that Greek nomenclature could be ascribed to social organizations previously existing in the region.

⁵⁷ Seth Schwartz (2008) 195–200; (2010) 13–20 (on Jews) stresses that social models should reflect how integrated societies structure bonds of reciprocity and conceptions of communal solidarity so that they intersect and complement each other despite potential tensions.

⁵⁸ Van de Mieroop (1997) 101–18 treats real and fictive kinship in Mesopotamian cities.

⁵⁹ But surveys in the hinterland indicate extensive water-catchment systems. Meyer (2009), (2011); Schlumberger (1951).

and which a “tribal” assembly and prominent “elders” governed.⁶⁰ A population organized into such kinship structures may have been at Palmyra throughout the Hellenistic period.⁶¹ But during the first century CE, the various “tribes” of Palmyra, despite epigraphic evidence for some conflict, incrementally fashioned a common civic identification and ethos anchored in the Greek *polis*.⁶² The civic formations of Palmyra, which included “civic tribes,” worked in balanced tension with clan and “tribal” affiliations⁶³ and the power of local notables who “dominated” the political scene, accumulated wealth and clientage, and enabled the caravan trade.⁶⁴

The creation of a civic council strongly affected this transition. As a trilingual inscription in Latin, Greek, and Palmyrenean found near the theater shows, by 74 CE the Palmyrenes had formed a civic council that regulated “tribal” activities and thereby bolstered experiences of a Palmyrene civic community.⁶⁵ Its intervention restructured kinship bonds in ways that made them intersect with broader civic identifications. Explicit identifications with the civic order or with kinship groups were therefore not antagonistic. Not even the cultural and cultic heterogeneity of Palmyrene society, which incorporated numerous cultural and cultic strata, yielded fragmentation. Instead, kinship segmentation and the ritual practices of

⁶⁰ “Clans” (several genetic families sharing a remote ancestor) and “tribes” (a conglomeration of clans and families) require distinction. In Palmyrenean, both are designated by *bny* X (sons of X). Clans consisted of putatively common patrilineal ancestors, but tribes constituted numerous clans claiming broader ethnic or social bonds. Accordingly, it is often unclear whether labels of identification beginning with *bny* (sons of) index “clans” (literal genealogy) or “tribes” (classificatory). But unless the terms φύλη or φηδ is used to qualify what *bny* (sons of) means, the reference is probably to clans, not “tribes.” Tribal designations are first recorded in the first century BCE, reach highest frequency in the first century CE, start to decline between 100 and 150 CE, and virtually disappear by the third century. Piersimoni (1995) 253–57. Moreover, Kaizer (2002) 214–15 notes that *bny* can also denote religious or professional associations.

⁶¹ Little evidence indicates that the site, located at an oasis but otherwise surrounded by dry steppe, was inhabited continually. But a “Hellenistic Palmyra” south of the monumentalized Roman imperial city has been verified by Schmidt-Colinet and al-As’ad (2002); Schmidt-Colinet (2005b); al-As’ad and Schmidt-Colinet (2006–07); Schmidt-Colinet, al-As’ad, and al-As’ad (2005). Hammad (2010) 9–20 discusses pre-Hellenistic and Hellenistic activity at/around the sanctuaries of Bel and Baalshamin. Also, Kaizer (2010a) discusses tombs of the early or mid-Hellenistic period. Kaizer (2010c) 113 treats pre-Hellenistic references to Tadmor and third millennium BCE stratification of the tell where the temple of Bel resides.

⁶² The first attested epigraphic reference to a “Palmyrene people” (*gbl idmry*), from 11 CE, is examined by Gawlikowski and al-As’ad (1991–92) 164–67. *PAT* 0270=*CIS* 2.3, 3924=*IGLS* 17.1.24; *PAT* 1352–53 (omitting stocks)=*Inv.* 9.11–12=*IP* 27–28=*IGLS* 17.1.16–17 constitute inscriptions using “Palmyrene” in the early first century CE. *PAT* 0261=*CIS* 3915=*Inv.* 9.13 (21 CE) celebrates a notable who “made peace” among tribes.

⁶³ Yon (2002) 57–81; Kaizer (2002) 42–55 thoroughly discuss.

⁶⁴ Yon (2002) 233–35; Veyne (2005) 291 emphasize how notable families “dominated” Palmyrene society.

⁶⁵ Greek: [βουλ]ῆ and [δῆμος]; Palmyrenean: *bwl’ wdm̄s*; Latin: *bu[le et civi]tas Palmyrenorum*. Cantineau (1933) 175=*SEG* 7.133=*IP* 13= al-As’ad and Delplace (2002) no. 4=*IGLS* 17.1.304.

various cult associations, reflected by inscriptions and *tesserae* (small tokens) used for admission to sacred banquets, constituted a “communal set of ritual actions” facilitating overlapping networks of social affiliation.⁶⁶

The council’s hegemonic faculties mediated familial and tribal rivalries, and expressions of kinship became integral parts of civic life and denoted specific relationships to the civic body.⁶⁷ Kinship affiliations operated in a discursive and performative framework that the council, acting as a cohesive institution and a complex network of elites, had established by organizing civic spaces, regulating the calendar of public festivals, performing benefactions, and reaffirming its status through public statues and inscriptions. As described previously, in 131 CE the civic council erected an honorary statue to Males Agrippa, formerly *grammateus*, for providing oil to citizens during Hadrian’s visit to Palmyra in 129 and for financing the temple of Baal-shamin’s construction. The inscription was bilingual. The Greek inscription noted that Males was also called Agrippa, while the Palmyrenean version emphasized his clan descent, not his Roman name.⁶⁸ Yet, although the two translations have different orientations and were perhaps tailored for different literate audiences, they were decrees of the *boulē* and *dēmos* honoring an individual for his contributions to Palmyra’s civic life. In this sense, the two bilingual inscriptions were complementary. Both versions affirmed that the ideal individual or clan used its resources to benefit a discretely defined *dēmos* of Palmyrene citizens. The civic council thereby did not maintain civic cohesion by suppressing clans, individual competition, or elite authority but by focusing it on performances enacted on behalf of, and before, a citizen audience.

Accordingly, tribal affiliations and identifications persisted among the local sedentary and nomadic population, but civic affiliations facilitated commonality among the Palmyrenes in ways that transcended kinship divisions. It also organized competition for honor within euergetism performed for a civic collective, as opposed to violence among disparate clans who did not prioritize collective bonds.⁶⁹ Even if the terms with which Palmyra’s inscriptions describe Greek civic institutions and offices glossed traditional

⁶⁶ Kaizer (2002) 56–57, 164–65, 210–11 (quoted), 256–59; cultural strata and social affiliation. The *tesserae* are assembled in *RTP. PAT* 2012–623 contains the inscribed ones. Kaizer (2008a) illuminates.

⁶⁷ As Sommer (2005b) 289 argues, tribal and civic institutions could coexist, and the sedentary population of Palmyra interacted with nomadic elements in ways reinforcing tribal structures.

⁶⁸ *PAT* 0305=*CIS* 2.3, 3959=*IP* 10=*IGLS* 17.1.145. Taylor (2002) 322–23 discusses differences between the Greek and Palmyrenean. Similarly, *PAT* 0247=*CIS* 2.3, 3902.

⁶⁹ But kinship, wealth, and acts of patronage, especially those associated with the caravan trade and protection, still underpinned individual influence. *Agora* 224–25. Epigraphic attestations for Palmyrenes holding office are rare (in contrast with Greek or Roman practice), but this may reflect that honorific inscriptions only cited the most prestigious offices. Yon (2002) 36–40, 54–56.

practices, it is still significant that Palmyrenes adopted these terms.⁷⁰ They show that Palmyrene elites were presenting their community as a Greek *polis* to Roman imperial Syria's peer polity network and the Roman administration. Because of this trend, bilingual inscriptions frequently reflected the production of two independent inscriptions for Greek- and Palmyrenean-reading audiences, and Greek was often used in civic inscriptions.⁷¹ Such use of Greek as a civic language that marked authoritative institutions distinguishes Palmyra from Hatra and Parthian-era Edessa but coheres with the civic contexts of Rome's Syrian *ethnos*. In this sense, to be Palmyrene or *tdmry'* was to participate in the civic performances of a Greek *politeia*, even if Palmyrene Greekness was new and different and Aramaic-speaking *pol(e)itai* called themselves "sons of the city" (*bny mdynt'*).⁷²

Accordingly, it must be stressed how the civic council's intervention transformed acts of kinship-oriented religious piety into deeds of civic euergetism. The differences between the cultic dedicatory inscriptions with the formula 'l *hyy* or ὑπὲρ ὑγείας/ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας (for the life/health of) and honorific inscriptions with the phrase *lyqr* or τειμῆς χάριν/ἔνεκεν (in honor of) reflect this social process.⁷³ The formula 'l *hyy* had been an Assyrian formula long before Alexander's conquests, and at Palmyra individuals dedicated inscriptions with this formula to divinities "for the life of" their kin, often while proclaiming their clan membership.⁷⁴ This formula, one ensconced in Mesopotamian traditions, typified the cult dedications of local populations organized into kinship groups competing for status and power. It was therefore used in the Aramaic inscriptions of Edessa and Hatra and the Greek inscriptions of Parthian Dura-Europos as well.

⁷⁰ Sartre (1996) 390–93 emphasizes Greek offices and inscriptions attesting them, and he indicates that *synedroi* are likely the *boulē's* members, who are rarely labeled as *bouleutai*. Sommer (2005) 286 has stressed that what exactly the *agoranomoi*, *grammateis*, and *bouleutai/synedroi* did for official duties is unclear; these terms could have described people engaging in traditional social activity. The inscription mentioning the gymnasiarch (*gymnsyrks*) is undated, but Sartre dates it to the second century. *PAT* 1406=Inv. 10.102=Agora V.11=IGLS 17.1.221. Along with references to *symposia*, the symposiarch of Bel is cited in *PAT* 0316=CIS 2.3, 3970=IGLS 17.1.157; *PAT* 0265=CIS 2.3, 3919. Yon (2002) 240–44 and 246–47 compiles lists of offices.

⁷¹ Millar (1995) 403–19 notes that in bilingual and trilingual public inscriptions, Greek words and concepts are typically transcribed into Latin and Palmyrenean. But Taylor (2002) 321–23 argues that Greek and Palmyrenean bilingual translations are independent.

⁷² A similar logic may explain why Palmyra's coins differ in many respects from the municipal issues of other Greek city-states in Syria. Kaizer (2007) treats Palmyra's coins.

⁷³ Dijkstra (1995) 154–67, 292–93, 335–43; Kaizer (2004) 167–68 significantly examine this formula, which imperial cult inscriptions also contain. Moralee (2004).

⁷⁴ Dijkstra (1995) 3 emphasizes how the Assyrian formula *ana balat* was the precursor to the Palmyrenes' "for the life of" dedications.

Conversely, the formula *lyqr/τειμῆς χάριν*, although attested at Palmyra more than in other Greek city-states, was certainly derived from the language of honor (τ(ε)ιμή) or at least the “social language” of raising honorific statues and inscriptions touted by Roman imperial Greek *poleis*.⁷⁵ It therefore denotes the Palmyrenes’ consolidation of peer polity bonds with the network of Greek communities that constituted the core structuring principle of the Syrian *ethnos* of the Roman imperial era, despite Palmyra’s unique culture and isolated location. Although the formula appeared in some early Palmyrenean inscriptions, its usage increased substantially after the civic council’s first attested formation (74 CE) and coincides with the gradual realignment of Palmyra’s civic life.⁷⁶ It frequently appears in honorific inscriptions that the council made for well-deserving citizens or civic groups.⁷⁷ Such honorific dedications were not restricted to the *boulē*. Cultic organizations or *synodiai* (caravans) also honored patrons with them, and in tombs, parents used the formula to honor themselves and male offspring. Yet, such honorific inscriptions also rarely made references to horizontal kinship. They emphasized the bonds of patronage and clientage that were nonetheless structured by Greek civic performance, whether the client of a benefactor’s benevolence was the *boulē*, the *dēmos*, caravans, cult associations, or individuals.

Competition for honor, as encapsulated by the formula *lyqr/τειμῆς χάριν*, was therefore shaped by the framework of signification that the *boulē* had produced. While the Assyrian formula *’l hyy* stressed kin prestige and almost always involved a cult dedication, the formula *lyqr* and the honorific statues that could accompany it stressed the contributions of individuals or groups to civic life even if their benefactions only benefited certain segments of the population. This formula did not necessarily involve cult activity, and it significantly delineated the Palmyrenes’ self-perceived membership within a peer polity network vaunting the honorific ethos of Greek *politeia* in Roman imperial Syria.⁷⁸ Also, although issues of literacy and orality cannot be discussed here, it should be noted that

⁷⁵ Yon (2002) 13–16.

⁷⁶ For early first-century CE usages, *PAT* 0261=Inv. 9.13=CIS 2.3, 9315; *PAT* 1352–53 (omitting stocks)=Inv. 9.11–12=IP 27–28=IGLS 17.1.16–17; *PAT* 1356=Inv. 9.20=IGLS 17.1.12. Dijkstra (1995) 337 provides short list.

⁷⁷ Appendix G of Dijkstra (1995) 337–44 compiles the dedicators and beneficiaries of *lyqr* inscriptions, and 341–43 lists instances in which the formula *lyqr* is not explicitly used but is implied by epigraphic and archaeological context. Yon (2002) 249–50 provides a list of the council’s inscriptions. The *boulē* was also probably responsible for inscriptions dedicated by “the *polis*” or the “four tribes.”

⁷⁸ Dirven (2008) 236–46 maintains that the formula *’l hyy* is not interchangeable with *lyqr* and is not used in association with “honorary” statues. Instead, the formula, as used in Hatra, is inscribed on statues placed in cult shrines and offered to divinities.

viewers who could not read still could internalize the social value of the two different types of inscriptions based on their material context. “For the life of” inscriptions were often inscribed into dedications at cult spaces, but “for the honor of” inscriptions accompanied honorific statues outside them or elsewhere, with memories of benefactions likely circulating orally and at various social gatherings.

In this sense, sometimes dedicators could “honor” parties who presumably shared devotion to the same gods.⁷⁹ In a notable inscription, a Palmyrene who had donated a column to the temple of “Nebo” c. 146 CE “for his life and the life of his sons” was praised by his sons, who raised a statue at the temple “in his honor.”⁸⁰ The sanctuary of “Nebo” was frequented by Palmyrenes of diverse kinship affiliations, and it was easily accessible to the citizen body.⁸¹ By donating to this temple “for the life of himself and his sons,” while probably citing clan membership, this Palmyrene stressed the significance of his kinship ties. Likewise, when his sons erected a statue “in his honor” at the temple, they situated their family within the civic community’s hierarchy of prestige. They honored a relative before fellow citizens for his benefaction, which they endowed with civic implications. It was by this same logic that the council in 74 CE honored a benefactor of temples, a notable named Hairanes (*hyrn*), as *philopatris* (pious and patriotic) and a “friend of his city.”⁸² Being the earliest inscription even to mention the council’s existence, it apparently recast dedications made for kin as civic deeds.

The framework of signification that the *boulē* and its *lqr* inscriptions produced determined how clan or “tribal” competition and cult performance, as exemplified by ‘*l hyy*’ inscriptions, transformed over time. The *boulē* reconstituted kinship and patron rivalries, which otherwise could have triggered clan-based violence, as manifestations of civic performance by locating such competition for honor before a citizen audience. As a result, if patrons and families desired prestige, they had to obtain it from

⁷⁹ Drijvers (1995b) describes honors conferred by Allat and a “tribe.” Iarhibol “bore witness” to deeds of notables in *PAT* 1063=Milik (1972) 36=*IGLS* 17.1.307; *PAT* 1398=*Inv.* 10.85=*Agora* V.08=*IGLS* 17.1.223; Bounni (1992–2004) no. 39. Kaizer (2004) 172–75. *PAT* 2770=*IGLS* 17.1.152 (date 115 CE) honors (*lqr*) a neighboring clan.

⁸⁰ *PAT* 0009=Bounni (1992–2004) no. 10. The honorific inscriptions *PAT* 0193; 0196; 0273=*CIS* 2.3, 3927=*IGLS* 17.1.306 also commemorate religious acts.

⁸¹ Yon (2002) 81–86 discusses the temple. Dijkstra (1995) 115; Yon (2002) 140–41 discuss the inscription and gift exchange.

⁸² Cantineau (1933) 175=*SEG* 7.133=*IP* 13=al-As’ad and Delplace (2002) no. 4=*IGLS* 17.1.304. *PAT* 1356=*Inv.* 9.20=*IGLS* 17.1.12; *PAT* 2801=al-As’ad and Delplace (2002) no. 1=*Choix* 55=*IGLS* 17.1.535, with Yon (2002) 44–47, (2010) 235–36, treat this figure. “Friend of the city” is the Aramaic translation of the Greek *philopatris* and follows a “Greek model.” Healey (2008a) 79.

fellow Palmyrene citizens through euergetic deeds that benefited them. In pre-Roman Edessa and Hatra, where Greek *boulai* did not structure civic, kinship, or patronage activity, the construction *lqyr* was not used, except in one unusual instance.⁸³ In all three cities, inscriptions were erected before a divine and human audience to protect “the life of” kin, patrons, or clients. But only at Palmyra did civic groups, kin, and clients celebrate individuals by commissioning *lqyr/τειμή*ς χάριν inscriptions, which were adaptations of the honorific rhetoric of Roman imperial Syria’s Greek polities, for a discrete citizen audience. At Palmyra, personal and familial honor was a civic matter. The *boulē* made it so.

Inscribing Greekness: the epigraphic context of Palmyra

As described above, the *boulē* generated a hegemonic framework in which elites competed for honor (*yqr/τ(ε)ιμή*) before a discrete audience of citizens. While emphasizing the career of Soados, a Palmyrene notable, this section argues that the council’s hegemonic dispositions and its epigraphic habit, which individual Palmyrenes replicated in many contexts, generated experiences of a Greek civic order. They did so despite and sometimes by means of Palmyra’s internal cultural tensions, dimorphic networks, or reliance on Near Eastern idioms.

Palmyra’s honorific inscriptions, whether sanctioned by the civic council, individual clients, or kinsmen, exhibit consistent formulaic features and an enduring ideological perspective. They celebrated acts of civic euergetism or benefactions enriching the civic order. Whether individuals received honors from an organization, clients, or kin, they earned them for benefactions framed as civic even if they directly benefited only select people. Contributions of elites to the caravan trade along the Persian Gulf exemplify this trend.⁸⁴ In 132 CE, a caravan (*synodial/bny šyrt*³) raised inscribed statues for a certain Soados, son of Boliades (*š‘dw br blyd*⁴) at four of Palmyra’s temples.⁸⁵ It did so because Soados, who apparently spent substantial portions of his career in Vologasias, had protected it as it voyaged

⁸³ H65; Dijkstra (1995) 188–89. Dirven (2011b) discusses other cultural and religious differences between Palmyra and Hatra. Seth Schwartz (2009b) has also argued that lack of a euergetic culture and its epigraphic expression is noticeable for first-century Jerusalem.

⁸⁴ Schuol (2000) 47–89, 380–88; Young (2001) 136–86 discuss the caravan trade and the Palmyrenes’ connections to principalities on the Persian Gulf.

⁸⁵ The inscription has Greek and Palmyrenean versions; the first five lines of the Palmyrenean are fragmentary. *PAT* 0197=Dunant (1971) no. 45=*Agora* An. 29=*IGLS* 17.1.150. Soados’ name appears to be of Arabic origin. Stark (1971) 115; Harding (1971) 318; Negev (1991) 66; Sartre (2007b) 201.

from Vologasias to Palmyra.⁸⁶ At first glance, these statues and inscriptions may seem a private affair; a group of clients was honoring its patron. The caravan's members, however, embedded their activity and Soados' conduct in a framework of citizenship. While praising Soados for being *philopatris*, they described how Soados protected traders, caravans, and *pol(e)itai* in Vologasias. Their choice of the word *pol(e)itai* is significant. Palmyrenean funerary and dedicatory inscriptions outside Palmyra indicate that expatriate Palmyrenes conceived of themselves as Palmyrene or *tdmry'* when they were elsewhere in the Roman empire.⁸⁷ Yet, in this case, the emphasis on *pol(e)itai* differentiated the Palmyrenes, as members of a Greek collective, from the inhabitants of Vologasias.

This inscription indicates that Palmyrenes deemed themselves citizens of a Greek city by the second century CE. This had not always been so. Before their *boulē*'s formation, the Palmyrenes had differentiated themselves from Greeks. In 19 CE, Palmyrene traders and "Greeks of Seleucia" on the Tigris erected an honorific inscription to a Palmyrene who had contributed to the construction of Palmyra's temple of Bel.⁸⁸ The inscription distinguished the Seleucians, as Greeks (*[Hellēn]es/ywny'*), from Palmyrenes in ways that had typified the Near East's ethnic groups during the periods of Seleucid and Parthian rule. Yet, a century later Palmyrenes were calling themselves *pol(e)itai* or its Aramaic correlate "sons of the city" (*bny mdynt'*), terms that located Palmyra among the Greek cities of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*.⁸⁹

The Greek portion of Soados' honorific inscription also justified Soados' honors by citing how he had been "honored with decrees, public measures, statues, and the letter and edict of Publicius Marcellus, our illustrious consular lord." Its fragmentary Palmyrenean counterpart likewise states that he had been "adorned" in the name of the *boulē* and the *dēmos*.⁹⁰ This explicit reference to previous honors that Soados received

⁸⁶ For Soados' career, Matthews (1984) 166–68; Young (2001) 144–45, 150–51, 153–54.

⁸⁷ Such inscriptions, written in Latin, Greek, or Palmyrenean, were erected in Rome, Algeria, and Syria. *PAT* 0246–47, 0253, 0255, 0257=CIS 2.3, 3901–2, 3908–9, 3911.

⁸⁸ *PAT* 0270=CIS 2.3, 3924=IGLS 17.1.24, from the temple of Bel. The Palmyrenean counterpart justifies Greek restorations that editors have made.

⁸⁹ Although references to Palmyrenes and *tdmry'* appear in inscriptions as early as the mid-first century CE, *politēs* first emerges in inscriptions after the *boulē*'s establishment. *PAT* 1423=Inv. 10.129=Agora IX.02=IGLS 17.1.226; *PAT* 2778=Cantineau (1938) 76=IGLS 17.1.19 (108 CE and 84 CE) use *pol(e)itēs*. The trilingual funerary inscription *PAT* 2801=al-As'ad and Delplace (2002) no. 1=Choix 55=IGLS 17.1.535 cites Palmyrenes or *tdmry'*. *PAT* 0269=CIS 2.3, 3923=IGLS 17.1.18 is an honorific inscription (51 CE) that the "polis of the Palmyrenes" or *gbl tdmry'* erected.

⁹⁰ Drijvers (1995a) 39 thus emends Dunant's reading of *PAT* 0197=Dunant (1971) no. 45=Agora An. 29=IGLS 17.1.150 (reflecting emendation).

from the council and a consular governor shows that the caravan deemed its trade a civic matter. It demonstrates that the *boulē* had crafted a civic context and hegemonic system in which organizing caravan trade and honoring successful patrons constituted forms of exemplary citizen activity. While caravan patrons or clan leaders accumulated personal wealth and loyal clients through their personal authority, their activity was akin to holding public offices or performing benefactions through donations of money or public buildings. The same can be claimed for caravan leaders who often oversaw public honors for patrons, and the caravan of 132 therefore had its current *synodiarchai* facilitate Soados' honors. The *boulē* had charged the activity of patrons and *synodiarchai* with civic meanings, and these in turn collaborated to earn honor from a citizen audience, from *pol(e)itai*. In fact, another caravan honored Soados in 144 because he protected it from robbers. While describing how the caravan erected statues in the same four sanctuaries where his likenesses had been raised in 132, albeit with the temple of Allat exchanged for the temple of Baalshamin, the bilingual inscription praised his patriotism and generosity toward fellow citizens (*poleitai*).⁹¹ It also stated in Greek and Aramaic that the caravan that Soados aided was the "caravan of all Palmyrenes" or of "all Tadmor." This caravan encompassed the interests of the Palmyrene community, not merely investors, tariff collectors, patrons, families, or traders.

Yet, it must be stressed that Soados' caravans were not the only civic groups to honor him. In 145 CE, the *boulē* and *dēmos* honored Soados for his patronage of traders, caravans, and *poleitai* at Vologasias and for the position of authority (*dynasteia*) that he perhaps had discharged there.⁹² Their inscription noted how Soados' works had earned praise from the emperors Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, along with the legate Publicius Marcellus and his consular successors.⁹³ It also cited the public inscriptions and statues through which the *boulē* and *dēmos*, caravans, and on one occasion, *pol(e)itai* had honored him. While stipulating that statues of Soados be placed at "the *tetradeion*" (four main sanctuaries) and noting

⁹¹ Drijvers (1995a) 34–38 = *Agora* An. 31 = *Choix* 5 = *IGLS* 17.1.127, with Kaizer (2002) 62–63, from the temple of Allat.

⁹² *PAT* 1062 (which omits a Greek line) = Mouterde and Poidebard (1931) 106–7 = *SEG* 7.135 = Milik (1972) 13 (for Aramaic) = *Agora* An. 30, found at Umm el-'Amad, records honors earned from the council and people. Matthews (1984) 167 properly understands *dynasteia* not as a literal "dynasty," especially since Soados was "entrusted" (*encheiristhenta*) with it. It probably reflects how Palmyrenes held civic positions in foreign cities. *SEG* 20.385; *PAT* 1374 = *Inv.* 10.38 = *IP* 15 = *Agora* VI.04 = *IGLS* 17.1.245.

⁹³ Roman officials also bore witness for Palmyrenes in *PAT* 0278 = *CIS* 2.3, 3932 = *IP* 18 = *IGLS* 17.1.53; (with Iarhibol) *PAT* 1063 = Milik (1972) 36 = *IGLS* 17.1.307.

that Soados was the first citizen to be so honored,⁹⁴ it also mandated that three statues be erected in Charax Spasinou, Vologasias, and Genna. Charax Spasinou and Vologasias were at this time located in the kingdom of Mesene. Genna was likely the site outside Palmyra where caravans had their “residential quarters” and where this specific inscription was found.⁹⁵

All the honors that Soados received show how thoroughly the caravan trade was implicated in a civic ethos underpinned by the council’s activity. Soados’ client caravan in 132 justified its conferring of honors by citing the praise that Soados had previously earned from the *boulē* and Roman officials. The *boulē* reciprocated in 145 by stressing that caravans, citizens, Roman authorities, and the *boulē* and *dēmos* had likewise commemorated his civic deeds. This documentary chain shows that honors conferred upon individuals by clients, friends, or kin did not disrupt civic identification or affiliation. It in fact reaffirmed that citizens acquired honor from a citizen audience for conferring benefactions on it, and one of Soados’ friends accordingly honored Soados with a statue at the temple of Bel in 147.⁹⁶ While caravans and individuals honored elites with whom they shared bonds of kinship or patronage, they still imitated the *boulē* and reinforced its hegemonic powers within the context of competitive efforts to confer benefactions and acquire public recognition from citizens. The *boulē* had restructured the activities and beliefs of dimorphic groups and caravan traders so that they participated in a perceived Greek civic framework even if nothing about dimorphism and caravan trading was intrinsically “Greek” by most classicizing standards. Accordingly, when the *boulē* erected an honorific inscription to a certain *philopatris* and *philoteimos* (honor lover) named Iariboles (*yrḥbwł*), it praised him both for patronizing caravan merchants in Charax Spasinou and for going on embassy to “Orodes, king of Ailymene” on Palmyra’s behalf.⁹⁷ The *boulē* for similar reasons honored Ioulios Aurelios Neboumaios (*nbwmy*), a *synodiarchēs*, for “bringing back the caravan and pleasing the *polis*.”⁹⁸

Likewise, the honors that Soados had received from Roman officials suggest that the Roman administration too had cast caravan trading as

⁹⁴ Delplace and Fournet (2005) 117–18; Kaizer (2008c) 657 see Soados’ inscriptions as evidence for sanctuaries (*tetradeion*) of four civic tribes. *PAT* 1062 omits the line regarding Soados’ honors at the *tetradeion*.

⁹⁵ Bowersock (1989); Gawlikowski (1994); Schuol (2000) 355–56, 395–97; Young (2001) 142–48 discuss the bilingual inscription of the Lysippan Herakles that the Parthian king Vologaeses IV removed from Mesene to Seleucia on the Tigris c. 151 CE and how Vologasias was in Mesene *IGSK* 65.86: inscription.

⁹⁶ *PAT* 0115=Gawlikowski (1970) 66=*IGLS* 17.1.29 (147 CE).

⁹⁷ *PAT* 1414=*Inv.* 10.114=*Agora* VI.05=*IGLS* 17.1.227.

⁹⁸ *PAT* 1360=*Inv.* 9.30 (unknown date)=*IGLS* 17.1.22.

affirmative civic behavior, in addition to a socio-economic boon. The Roman administration and local Palmyrene elites, organized into a *boulē* institution, had collaborated to fashion an ideological context in which Palmyrenes conceived of their city as a Greek *polis* sustained by Roman imperial patronage. In this sense, Roman administration and its patronage of the Greek city-state interpellated Palmyrenes as Roman imperial subjects. Soados certainly seems to have embraced Roman imperial affiliation. As his honorific inscription of 145 seemingly states, he had constructed a temple of the Augusti in Vologasias for his fellow *poleitai*.⁹⁹ In Roman-era Syria, Greek civic performance and its debt to Roman patronage were closely implicated in the imperial cult's veneration, and at Vologasias, emperor worship characterized the Greek *pol(e)itai* of Palmyra.

Even if *synodiarchai* were clan leaders or influential notables, their governance of caravan activity was considered a civic office embedded in a Greek civic framework. As noted in chapter 4, the *boulē* and *dēmos* in 199 CE erected four statues and honorific inscriptions for Ogelos, son of Makkaïos ('*gylw br mqy*'), who had, amid many benefactions, served as general against "nomads" (*nomades*) and had protected numerous caravans as a *synodiarchēs*.¹⁰⁰ Ogelos had therefore "performed illustriously and conspicuously his entire *politeia*." The term *politeia*, which the inscription spelled "*poleitia*," also appeared in Aramaic transliteration (*plty*'), and it clarified that Ogelos' contributions to the caravan trade constituted a form of civic euergetism and upright citizen behavior. The *boulē*'s employment of the concept of *politeia* reaffirmed that Palmyra was anchored in a network of Greek cities in Syria. It justified the *boulē*'s hegemonic functions within the city, empowering it to recast the private endeavors of the caravan trade as civic behaviors. In such ways, eastern caravan traders had become civic Greeks. They were citizens of a community intimately joined to a peer group of Greek cities with a similar civic ethos even if ethnic, cultural, and cult variations continued to flourish. Accordingly, when merchants honored their patrons, they displayed to an audience of Palmyrene citizens how their actions sustained the city's prosperity. It is within this framework that the numerous inscriptions honoring Markos Oulprios Iaraios (*yrby*), the most frequently attested caravan patron, should be analyzed,¹⁰¹ along

⁹⁹ Bru (2011) 101–5 treats this inscription (partially reconstructed) and Palmyra's imperial cult.

¹⁰⁰ *PAT* 1378 = *Inv.* 10.44 = *IP* 16 = *Agora* VI.18 = *IGLS* 17.1.222. Ogelos' name appears of Arabic origin. Stark (1971) 104; Harding (1971) 408; Sartre (2007b) 224.

¹⁰¹ *PAT* 0274 = *CIS* 2.3, 3928, 306 = *CIS* 2.3, 3960 (and *Inv.* 10.87–88); *PAT* 1422 = *Inv.* 10.128 = *Agora* IA.05 = *IGLS* 17.1.202; *PAT* 1395–96, 1399, 1403, 1409, 1411 = *Inv.* 10.77–78, 90, 96, 107, 111 (these correspond generally to *Agora* VI.9–14; *IGLS* 17.1.248–51, 255–56, and 313). Also, Milik (1972) 32–33; Cantineau (1938) 75, no. 28.

with the numerous inscriptions raised by caravans for patrons during the second and third centuries CE.¹⁰²

In Palmyra, civic, kinship, and patronage bonds overlapped, largely because of the *boulē*'s intervention, and five honorific statues erected on inscribed column consoles show how the conferment of public honors could facilitate the intersection of civic, kinship, and personal interests.¹⁰³ As the inscriptions state, these statues were erected on the Transversal Colonnade in a single month of 179 CE, and they involved Soraichos, son of Hairanes (*šrykw br hyrn*). Of the honorees, Soraichos possessed the greatest status. In the Greek version of his inscription, the *boulē* honored him for being pious, patriotic, and loving honor (*philoteimos*). The Palmyrenean version emphasized why specifically the *boulē* had erected a statue of him. He had funded seven ornamented columns on "this basilica," the Transversal Colonnade. Soraichos had performed a major civic benefaction, and he was therefore receiving appropriate honors from the *boulē*.

Yet, his was not the only honorific statue and inscription. The members of the tribe of the *Zabdiboleioi/bny zbdbwl* erected statues and inscriptions to honor Soraichos' sons and his brother.¹⁰⁴ While the *Zabdiboleioi* may have been honoring kinsmen, their statues complemented the public honors that the civic council had bestowed on Soraichos. The citizen body of Palmyra was the intended audience for these statues and inscriptions, which reflect an overlapping, not mutually antagonistic, set of concerns and affiliations, whether those of kin, clients, or citizens. The civic council had honored the member of the family with the most prestige and authority, and kinsmen had supplemented this gesture by honoring relatives who had made smaller benefactions. In continuity with this trend, Soraichos himself claimed in the series' final inscription to have erected a statue of his wife Martheis (*mrt'*) in her memory.

These interrelated honorific inscriptions thereby show that being a generous patron, husband, or kinsman complemented the practice of normative citizenship within a Palmyrene civic context. They indicate that honors conferred by the council and those by kinsmen were not shaped by differences in values, aims, or expectations but by gradation. Important

¹⁰² *PAT* 0294–95=*CIS* 2.3, 3948–49; 0279=*CIS* 2.3, 3933. Additional honors granted by caravans to patrons are, for example, *PAT* 0306=*CIS* 2.3, 3960; 0309=*CIS* 2.3, 3963; 1366=*Inv.* 10.7, 1376=*Inv.* 10.40; 1397=*Inv.* 10.81, 1399=*Inv.* 10.90; 1403=*Inv.* 10.96. Yon (2002) 263–64 presents list. *PAT* 1374=*Inv.* 10.38=*IP* 15=*Agora* VI.04=*IGLS* 17.1.245: A Palmyrene in the royal administration of Charax Spasinou (131 CE). *Agora* VI; *IGLS* 17.1.240–61, with 17.1.313, usefully gather caravan inscriptions from the agora. Yon (2002) 263–65 compiles list.

¹⁰³ *IGLS* 17.1.113–17=*CIS* 2.3, 3950–54=*PAT* 0296–0300 (different order). Also, *PAT* 0298=*IP* 24.

¹⁰⁴ *PAT* 0296–0300=*CIS* 2.3, 3950–54=*IGLS* 17.1.113–17 (different order). Kaizer (2002) 100.

individuals received honors from the civic council and other constituents, but those of less significance earned them only from clients or kinsmen. Yet, all honorific statues and inscriptions were produced for the consumption of a discrete citizen body, before which elites competed for prestige as exemplary patrons, kinsmen, and, above all, citizens. This civic ideology displaced kinship violence or elite feuds, which perhaps always loomed. In an honorific inscription of 198 CE, the *boulē* and *dēmos* honored with four statues a certain Ailios/*lys*, a magistrate (*stratēgos*) who secured peace amid some form of internal turmoil. The “tribe” of the *Chōneitōi* (*bny kmr*) made one of them.¹⁰⁵

The honors conferred upon notable caravan patrons, caravan leaders, temple-builders, and dedicators of religious offerings show that even if local or wider Near Eastern traditions still flourished at Palmyra, the Palmyrenes framed their homeland as a Greek city of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*. They were therefore distinguishable from other ethnicities, temple communities, or villages of the Near East not having this status. In this vein, the occasional use of the term *Hadrianē* to describe Palmyra, mostly in foreign contexts, indicates that Palmyrenes were vying with other cities of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos* for recognition as centers of Greek civic performance. The name is first attested directly after Hadrian visited Palmyra in 129 CE, and its usage corresponds with Hadrian’s elevation of the nearby city of Damascus as the *metropolis* of Coele Syria.¹⁰⁶ The Palmyrenes’ use of the name *Hadrianē* thereby indicates that they were competing with Damascus’ elevated status in the Syrian *ethnos*. It is worth noting that the name *Hadrianē* was adopted by many Greek cities of contemporary Thrace, Bithynia, Pontus, Cilicia, and other places marginal to classical Greece. Such cities were probably asserting legitimate Greek status amid contemporary challenges to it, and so, apparently, were the Palmyrenes.¹⁰⁷ A further indication of peer polity networking is that a

¹⁰⁵ *PAT* 1063=Milik (1972) 36=*IGLS* 17.1.307. The Greek states that the Palmyrene was general on numerous occasions. The Palmyrenean notes that he “made peace in the boundaries of the city” (*‘bd šlm’ bithwmy mdyt’*). If it describes an internal disturbance, the *boulē*’s authorities and officials clearly had the means to preserve peace through coercion, moderation, or negotiation.

¹⁰⁶ *PAT* 0305=*CIS* 2.3, 3959=*IP* 10=*IGLS* 17.1.145 celebrates Hadrian’s visit to Palmyra. The earliest reference to a “Hadrian Palmyrene” is an honorific statue and inscription erected in Palmyra’s *agora* in 131 BC for a “Hadrian Palmyrene” serving as satrap in the royal administration of Charax Spasinou. *PAT* 1374=*Inv.* 10.38=*IP* 15=*Agora* VI.04=*IGLS* 17.1.245. Potts (1997) 95 provides more information on this inscription. *PAT* 0247=*CIS* 2.3, 3902 (236 CE), records a “Hadrian Palmyrene” at Roma. Likewise, Palmyrenes in mid-third century Egypt and in Trachonitis of Syria. *SEG* 34.1593; Waddington (1870) 2440. *IGLS* 5.2552 marks *fin[es] inter Hadrianos Palmyrenos et Emesenos*. The Palmyrene Tariff Decree (*PAT* 0259=*CIS* 2, 3, 3913 lines II.1) features it in Aramaic (*bdryn’ tdmr*). *BMC Galatia* 283, Pl. 34.8 presents coins of Damascus with the title of *metropolis*.

¹⁰⁷ As Boatwright (2000) 105 observes.

bilingual inscription treats a certain Ogelos (‘*gylw*’), also called Alexander, as both an Antiochene and a Palmyrene.¹⁰⁸ The presence of a gymnasiarch (*gmnsyrks*) written in the Palmyrenean of fragmentary, bilingual inscription even premises that the Palmyrenes had established gymnastic structures through which athletes could be trained for Greek games in *poleis* of Roman imperial Syria.¹⁰⁹ This reference to a gymnasiarch, the existence of a second-century theater and perhaps an amphitheater, and artistic representations of mythical figures in the heroic nude in tombs and houses at Palmyra suggest that young Palmyrene elites were participating in Greek gymnastic culture and attending Greek games of other Syrian polities.¹¹⁰ If so, Palmyrenes were participating in a network of peer Greek polities that, beneath Roman patronage and oversight, was the core structuring principle of the Syrian *ethnos*. The Aramaic epithet for a Palmyrene “Greek” (*ywnyt*), discussed in chapter 3, should perhaps be read in this context. After 194 CE, Palmyrenes certainly deemed themselves (Syro)Phoenicians of Syria Phoenice.¹¹¹

Such was the civic framework that the civic council, its social activity, and its inscriptions generated. While the Greek and Palmyrenean versions of many such honorific inscriptions differed in emphasis and accommodated different literate audiences, they were not necessarily contradictory elements. They instead constituted two different strategies for framing a cohesive symbolic order and civic system within which Palmyra’s kinship and patronage groups could be structured in ways that generated perceptions and experiences of community. In this sense, the *boulē* employed Palmyrenean language and concepts to promote an ideology of Greek civic *politeia* among Palmyrenes who did not otherwise have the prerequisite education or social standing to participate in a Greek symbolic order. Bilingualism was a strategy employed by a *boulē* to maintain its hegemonic position, and it was also a strategy used by individuals to elevate their status within it, as shown by the many bilingual funerary, dedicatory, or honorific inscriptions erected by Palmyrenes. The use of both languages was thereby

¹⁰⁸ Only the Greek calls him Antiochene and Alexander, however. Bounni (1992–2004) no. 17=IGLS 17.1.177.

¹⁰⁹ PAT 1406=Inv. 10.102=Agora V.11=IGLS 17.1.221. The inscription has no internal date, but Sartre (1996) 390–93 suggests the second century. A gymnasiarchy likely accompanied a Greek *politeia* and council.

¹¹⁰ PAT 1378=Inv. 10.44=IP 16=Agora VI.18=IGLS 17.1.222. Likewise, aerial photos hint that Palmyra had an amphitheater. If verified, it could confirm Greek or Roman games. Hammad (2006–2007); (2008) 339–46. Degeorge (2001) 229–33 treats an image of Ganymede in the Tomb of the Three Brothers; Kaizer (2011) 334–336 analyzes a house-mosaic depicting a nude Cassiopeia and consorts.

¹¹¹ PAT 0907=CIS 2.3, 4546 (Pl. 53b for image); IGLS 17.1.193–94 (dated 194–96) honor the son of the governor of the “Phoenicians.”

not antagonistic, and while Greek had currency among Palmyra's elites as a written language of prestige, no evidence indicates that Palmyrenes belonged to distinct "language communities," especially since Aramaic was primarily spoken. All citizens were Palmyrene, and they belonged to a Greek *politeia*.

Palmyra's civic terrain and culture

As the section above argues, the activity of Palmyra's civic council structured Palmyrene kinship networks and caravan endeavors in ways that embedded them in a Greek civic context and framework of signification. Their coordinated and competitive pursuits produced experiences of a Greek citizen collective whose constituent cultural components were eclectic, heterogeneous, or even in tension. Competition for honor in this collective encompassed euergetic deeds more than clan-based violence. Although it must remain cursory, this section now describes how the Palmyrenes' Greek civic ethos and peer polity interactions within the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos* impacted Palmyra's urban topography. They transformed a landscape previously reflecting the activity of autonomous kinship groups into an integrated one radiating and replicating a citizen body's consolidation.

Before Palmyra's civic council existed, it appears that various kinship groups, perhaps residing in many instances at the Hellenistic settlement south of the future Roman one, initially oriented their cult "nuclei" on specific sanctuaries. These often housed modest mudbrick shrines, and they in some cases perhaps had been sites of human activity for centuries. Such phenomena, while hypothetical, probably shaped the Roman site's urban topography and apparently persisted thereafter.¹¹² While varied clans, "tribes" (whether clan-based or civic), or cultic associations could thereafter worship at diverse sanctuaries in a flexible way, they still had a tendency to concentrate their cult activity and benefactions on specific sites, even after they had formed a cohesive civic community. At this time, the Palmyrenes had not yet erected colonnades that organized gaze or movement in ways that inter-connected the settlement's key monuments. Even if primary cult sites were frequented by diverse worshippers, as Bel's certainly was, they were still modular units of Palmyra's landscape.

¹¹² Hammad (2010) 9–30 treats early settlement patterns. Yon (2002) 78–79; Sommer (2005b) 288. The temple of Baal-shamin can be concretely associated with the *bny m' zyn*. The temple of "Nebo" was built largely through the efforts of two families. Yon (2002) 81–86; Bounni (1992–2004) 47–48.

The civic council's first documentation in the trilingual inscription of 74 CE coincides with the incipient formation of an integrated topography at Palmyra. By this time, the initial settlement located southwest of the cult sites for Bel and "Nebo" expanded northwards in ways reflecting how civic institutions were structuring clan and tribal activity.¹¹³ Judging from the topographical layout, a discrete section emerged between the sanctuaries of Allat and "Nebo," and farther north, another section integrated the sanctuary of Baal-shamin.¹¹⁴ This expansion was accompanied by the construction of elaborate temples on existing cult sites and civic monuments. Such structures were primarily sustained by citizen benefactions consistent with those of contemporary Greek cities of the Syrian *ethnos*. Starting in the early first century CE, and even before the civic council's first documentation, the temple of Bel, located on a Hellenistic cult site, had been constructed incrementally through individual donations. In 56 CE, priests of Bel honored benefactors with statues, and the century that followed saw sustained euergetism for Bel's temple and sanctuary.¹¹⁵ Likewise, first-century citizens decorated the sanctuary of Baal-shamin with porticoes or columns; the temple and its sanctuary reached their final form by the mid-second century.¹¹⁶ Over the late-first and second centuries, such benefactions also shaped the incremental formation of the temples and sanctuaries of "Nebo" and Allat.¹¹⁷

Palmyra's massive colonnaded streets too were generated by incremental citizen benefactions. Along Palmyra's west side, many individuals contributed to the Transversal Colonnade at a north-south axis, and it

¹¹³ Hammad (2010) 9–30 now provides detailed discussion of Palmyra's initial settlement and urban transformation. I use traditional names for Palmyra's temples, although many deities were worshipped in them. Kaizer (2002) 66–108 analyzes deities worshipped at the temples of Bel, Baal-shamin, Nebo, and Allat.

¹¹⁴ Will (1983) 80 discusses these sections. Hammad (2010) 21–45 examines in detail. Palmyra's northeast area, where the modern town resides, is also under recent excavation. See Delplace (2006–2007).

¹¹⁵ Kaizer (2006b) discusses. *PAT* 0260=*CIS* 2.3, 3914=*IGLS* 17.1.21; *PAT* 0270=*CIS* 2.3, 3924=*IGLS* 17.1.24; *PAT* 1356=*Inv.* 9.20=*IGLS* 17.1.12; *Choix* 6=*IGLS* 17.1.308.

¹¹⁶ Kaizer (2002) 79–83. Along with undated benefactions, donations were made in 23, 52, 67, 131, and 149 CE. *PAT* 0158, 0167–68, 0170, 0176=Dunant (1971) nos. 1, 10–11, 14, 20; *PAT* 0305=*CIS* 2.3, 3959=*IP* 10=*IGLS* 17.1.145. These inscriptions do not include numerous other dedications, such as altars. Collart and Vicari (1969) 91–98; Dunant (1971) 13–68 present inscriptions and dedications linked to the sanctuary's formation. Many are in *PAT*.

¹¹⁷ Kaizer (2002) 89–90, 99–102 (with bibliography). Bounni (1992–2004): the excavation of the temple and sanctuary of "Nebo." Bounni (1992–2004) nos. 1, 14, 20, 31 (= *IGLS* 17.1.183), 40–41 document construction at the sanctuary. Yon (2002) 81–86 stresses the evidence that diverse families worshipped at the site, despite two families' prominence. Incremental contributions to the temple of Allat are *PAT* 0301=*CIS* 2.3, 3955; *PAT* 1608=Drijvers (1988) 171; Drijvers (1995b) 111; *PAT* 0331=*CIS* 2.3, 3985; *IGLS* 17.1.134–35. Gawlikowski (2008), with bibliography: excavations (full report pending).

constituted a transitional point connecting the original settlement to the sanctuary of Allat.¹¹⁸ Likewise, during the second and third centuries CE, it seems that citizens helped finance the three colonnades that would eventually combine to form the Grand Colonnade.¹¹⁹ Although the colonnaded street was not seamlessly integrated into the civic landscape, this is because the Hellenistic settlement was situated west of the temple of Bel. Most of the monuments between the temple of Bel and the Hellenistic town, which included both the temples of Bel and “Nebo,” therefore faced southwest toward this settlement area.¹²⁰ The Grand Colonnade likewise consisted of three unaligned segments located north of many of these south-oriented buildings and formatted to the city’s existing topography. It even encroached upon the sanctuary of “Nebo.”¹²¹ Despite this, the Grand Colonnade’s formation facilitated cohesion within Palmyra’s civic topography. Its awkward points of connection were disguised by a tetrapylon and a tripylon arch, and its consolidation into one massive segmented colonnade leading from the temple of Allat to the temple of Bel, which granted both physical and visual access to many of Palmyra’s primary cult and civic centers, incorporated the city’s variously oriented sections into a unified civic topography¹²² (Figures 15–16). This monumental street bisected the city and perhaps served as a processional way to the temple of Bel, whose sanctuary bears traces of Babylonian mythic precursors that could have informed cult rites.¹²³ Reliefs from the temples of Bel and Allat depicted the processional investiture of Allat to the city, and *tesserae* dedicated to a joint festival of Bel and Allat suggest that processions imitated

¹¹⁸ *PAT* 0296–0303=*CIS* 2.3, 3950–57 (0296–300=*IGLS* 17.1. 113–17, different order; 0298=*IP* 24).

¹¹⁹ *PAT* 1540 (incomplete)=*Inv.* 12.18 and 23=*IGLS* 17.1.96 (full inscription); *Inv.* 12.27=*IGLS* 17.1.94; *Inv.* 12.29=*IGLS* 17.1.97; *PAT* 1131=*Inv.* 12.19 (formerly *Inv.* 3.2)=*IGLS* 17.1.95, an exedra along the colonnade; possibly *IP* 21=*IGLS* 17.1.73; *IGLS* 17.1.80–81. Barański (1995) treats this formation.

¹²⁰ Schmidt-Colinet and al-As’ad (2002) 157–66; Schmidt-Colinet (2005b); al-As’ad and Schmidt-Colinet (2006–07); Schmidt-Colinet, al-As’ad, and al-As’ad (2008) illuminate Hellenistic Palmyra.

¹²¹ Similarly, the *agora* initially had a southwest orientation, but it eventually was reoriented northwest in alignment with the Grand Colonnade’s western part. Its construction is contemporary to the second-century spate of building and monumentalization at Palmyra. Delplace and Dentzer-Feydy (2005a) 349–58 (esp. 356–57). Bounni (1992–2004) 2.19 discusses the colonnade and Nebo’s sanctuary.

¹²² The colonnade’s piecemeal formation and its facilitation of processions to the temple of Bel are examined by Barański (1995); Yon (2002) 156–59; Butcher (2003) 245–46; Saliou (1996) 324.

¹²³ The temple’s peristyle had a relief depicting the battle between Bel-Marduk and Tiamat and what was perhaps an *akitu*, or a New Year’s festival known to have existed at ancient Babylon. Starcky and Gawlikowski (1985) 90–92; Tubach (1995) 130–34. Kaizer (2000) 231 significantly argues that such adoptions do not necessarily reflect “Babylonization.”



Figure 15. Panoramic of Palmyra, from the west.



Figure 16. Tetrapylon at first bend of the Grand Colonnade.

this event.¹²⁴ The Grand Colonnade was therefore a conduit providing a conceptual topographic connection between the temples of Allat and Bel flanking the city.

Because colonnades characterized the Greek civic communities of Roman imperial Syria, their construction at Palmyra, along with the

¹²⁴ Dirven (1998) 299–300, 305–6 presents evidence.

second-century theater that probably housed the council's meetings, reflects the Palmyrenes' peer polity emulation of other Greek city-states of the Syrian *ethnos*. They show that Palmyrenes were imitating and competing with the Greek cities of Syria and Arabia as they shifted the locus of their civic life to their *agora*, colonnades, and theater.¹²⁵ Antioch, Apamea, Damascus, Gerasa, and Philadelphia (Amman), for instance, had developed similar features during the second century CE. Further evidence for the Palmyrenes' peer polity connection to Roman Syria is that their practice of making anonymous dedications perhaps reflects their reorientation of the "worship of Hypsistos" that characterized Roman Anatolia and Syria.¹²⁶ They certainly participated in a specifically regional discourse on the myth of Cassiopeia characterizing Greek communities of the Near East.¹²⁷

In such ways, these topographical transitions contributed to Palmyra's innovative expressions of civic Greekness. Palmyra's dimorphism shaped the civic institutions for which the Palmyrenes used Greek names, but the Palmyrenes did not articulate their social structures with Greek terminology merely as a veneer to an underlying local reality or essence.¹²⁸ Even if their social structures were of a local variety distinct from those of other Greek cities, the Palmyrenes did not reject the notion that they were part of a broader Greek "commonwealth" comprised of a peer polity network. Their application of Greek magisterial names for traditional positions of authority exemplifies how they re-conceptualized local traditions to create a form of civic life that intersected with those of other Greek communities. By adopting Greek concepts of civic service, the community at Palmyra underwent an ideological shift as it knit traditional and new practices in ways that could earn it recognition as a Greek *polis*. Palmyra was a Greek collective of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos* even if local traditions and kinship networks dominated the civic fabric in ways that made Palmyra differ from other Greek cities. In fact, the ideological reorientation of the Palmyrene civic elites enabled the discrete categories of "Greek," "Syrian," and "Palmyrene" to intersect.¹²⁹ Depending on context, viewers could have deemed their "hybrid" architectural and artistic forms expressions of both

¹²⁵ Will (1983) 78; Yon (2002) 79–81; Starcky and Gawlikowski (1985) 113–22. The buildings on the agora often identified as a "curia" or "the senate house" have probably been misinterpreted. Seigne (2005); Kaizer (2008c) 654–55 offer that the second- and third-century council convened in the theater.

¹²⁶ As Kaizer (2004) 175–80, (2010c) 119 observes. ¹²⁷ Kaizer (2011) 334–36.

¹²⁸ Sommer (2005a) 121–22, 181–83.

¹²⁹ Kaizer (2001) 211–18 examines the relief of Nemesis from Khirbet Rhamadan in this vein, and Bru (2011) 157–73 links Nemesis to imperial cult practice in Syria.

Greek and Palmyrene civic performance, along with other ethnic, cultic, or social affiliations.

Amid local nuances, Palmyra's topography embedded its citizens in a recognizable but innovative Greek civic context. The influence of Near Eastern culture, including Aramaic language and Arabic idioms, did not preclude the celebration of Greekness. Instead, Palmyra's civic context reconstituted "Greek," "Syrian," and "Palmyrene" as intersecting categories and obfuscated the distinction between "Greek" and "Near Eastern" idioms. It was an interstice within which diverse cultural traditions were negotiated, thereby enabling citizens to form meaningful bonds with Greek cities to the west, communities of Mesopotamia to the east, and nomads of the steppe frontier. Palmyra's cultural performances were constantly transforming. So was Palmyra's Greekness.

Conclusion

Of the Syrian settlements that provide substantial epigraphic and material evidence, Palmyra perhaps exhibits the most definitively "indigenous," "native," or "local" continuities. This is because so many aspects of the Roman imperial settlement are characteristically Near Eastern or shaped by Near Eastern precedents. These appear to be richly textured composites that Palmyrenes generated by interweaving core unique practices with those that they adopted and adapted from many different societies. As a result, scholars have often construed the Roman imperial Greek practices that Palmyrenes cultivated as having constituted a superficial layer disguising a truly "oriental" essence. But forms and externals can be just as vital as content and internals, and Greek idioms perhaps did not constitute so much a layer as components interwoven into Palmyra's social fabric. This is not to say that Palmyrenes did not shift between Greek and "oriental" social or cultural universes, but these universes were entangled and overlapping for Palmyrenes more than most scholars of antiquity recognize.

Such issues pertain to the current scholarly discussion regarding whether the Palmyrenes practiced Greek *politeia*. It is perhaps not sufficient to qualify Palmyra as a Greek *polis* based merely on official titles and without considering its dimorphism and Near Eastern cultural practices. Yet, while it may seem that the Palmyrenes' "true identity" can be established by quantifying the origins of their cultural practices, it is not sufficient to conceive of Palmyra as "un-Greek" because Near Eastern or local practices predominate in the material record. As stated in the introduction, cultural idioms can assume polyvalent meanings, and social categories can shift, intersect,

and interweave practices of diverse origins. Signification and expression can be more a matter of form than content. It is for this reason that the Palmyrenes' epigraphic performances of citizen honor, underpinned by the activity of a civic council, highlight an ideological reorientation by which the Palmyrenes practiced Greek *politeia*. This reorientation embedded them in the Greek peer polity network of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos* and thereby facilitated Palmyra's unique expressions of Greekness and Syrianness. But the Palmyrenes accomplished it through traditional practices that abetted themselves, their kin, their clients, and their civic community.

Despite embracing various Near Eastern or unique local cultural forms, the Palmyrene civic council and citizen body produced and expressed an innovative form of civic Greekness. The Palmyrenes' Greek civic order reconstituted the significance of dimorphic kinship bonds, internal cultural tensions, and patron–client connections, and it integrated them in ways that solidified the social order. The civic life and cultural expressions of Palmyra thereby constituted alternatives to the classical Greek practices that the Antonine emperors, contemporary sophists, and communities in classical Greek lands embodied. As Part III stresses, the innovative cultural performances of the Palmyrenes would inform their third-century insurgency against the central Roman administration. But first, the next chapter examines another settlement that produced forms of Greekness deviating from classical models: Dura-Europos.

Dura-Europos
Changing paradigms for civic Greekness

The settlement of Dura-Europos, located on the middle Euphrates, was not integrated into the Roman imperial system until the 160s CE. Before then, it spent centuries under Parthian control, and during Trajan's invasion of Parthia (114–17 CE), it was only briefly occupied by Roman forces.¹ At this time, a certain Alexander raised a dedicatory inscription in Greek for a renovated temple (116–17 CE). His father had originally built it, but Roman soldiers had stolen its doors, thereby prompting Alexander to replace them and enlarge the temple itself. In this inscription Alexander initially described himself as “Alexander, son of Epinikos,” but he subsequently called himself “Ammaios, this same Alexander.”²

The next section explores the complexities of Alexander Ammaios' names. But for now, it should suffice to note that “Ammaios” is generally deemed Aramaic (or broadly Semitic) by origin. The diverse onomastic origins that these names represent have parallels in the settlement's social composition and its material culture. Also, in the Parthian period, the settlement's primary interface with the royal administration was a local “dynasty,” not the traditional governing structure of the classical *polis*. As such, Dura-Europos has been understood in terms of creolization, hybridity, the Middle Ground, the Third Space, and Greater/Lesser traditions.³ It has been reckoned a *polis* in concept but a departure from it in political and cultural reality. If it was the “Greekest” city of the eastern steppe frontier, the implication is that neither it nor its counterparts were quite Greek.⁴ But as stated previously, terms that emphasize cultural interweaving and

¹ An arch for Trajan outside Dura-Europos commemorated the occupation. *TEAD* 4, no. 167.

² *TEAD* 7–8, no. 868; Teixidor (1987) 188–89. *TEAD* 7–8, nos. 867, 869 commemorate Epinikos' temple and an additional dedication of Alexander.

³ Sommer (2005a) 25–28, 98–109, 121–23, 294–354; (2004a) 159–65; (2004b) 840–45: creolization, the Third Space, and Greater/Lesser traditions, overt/covert prestige, and Dura-Europos' governing structure. Hoffman (2011) 48–50, 55–56: utility of the Middle Ground and hybridity.

⁴ Sommer (2005a) 305. Similarly Baird (2012) 37, 43–44, who significantly stresses Near Eastern artistic and architectural precedents and the western agenda prioritizing Hellenism.

diverse traditions illuminate important social processes, but they do not define the categories of experience that provincial subjects produced while participating in them. They do not map transitions in how expressions of Greekness, Syrianness, and Romanness were formulated or how different imperial formations variously impacted them. Social categories, their cultural expressions, and how they interacted or intersected must therefore be analyzed.⁵

Dura-Europos' overwhelmingly Greek documents and its archaeological record highlight the cultural politics of a Greek community under Parthian, and perhaps by extension, Seleucid control. It is thereby possible to analyze how the Roman conquest transformed performances of Greekness at Dura-Europos as it weathered the transition from Seleucid or Parthian to Roman imperialism. As this chapter emphasizes, the Parthian- and Roman-era inhabitants of Dura-Europos generated practices and experiences of Greekness that were "un-classical." In fact, Dura-Europos' remote location and late integration into the Roman empire in many ways prompted it to generate a local culture different from other Greek cities in Syria. Still, the political, social, or economic transitions that Roman imperialism wrought stimulated Greek expressions distinct from those of the Parthian (or Seleucid) settlement, and they shaped the civic topography of parts of Dura-Europos that Greek citizens inhabited (Figure 17).

Alexander Ammaios' names

Since Alexander is otherwise unknown, it is impossible to produce a single interpretation of what his possessing Greek and Aramaic names meant for his cultural identification, but one possibility merits exploration. Alexander's epigraphic self-presentation cohered with that of certain Greek citizens in Europos possessing Greek and Aramaic names. By the reign of Trajan, the Greek civic body of Europos consisted of citizens who traced their Greekness, whether fictively or not, through patrilineal descent. In some instances intermarriage between Greek men and women of other ethnic origin helped perpetuate a self-defining Greek community cultivating many Near Eastern traditions. Yet, despite such possibilities for intermarriage, the Parthian administration continued the Seleucid practice of recognizing distinct Greek communities and governing institutions that excluded

⁵ This chapter pursues some goals outlined by Hoffman (2011) 49, 56 even if it cannot treat many "excluded" identifications, such as those defined by age or profession.

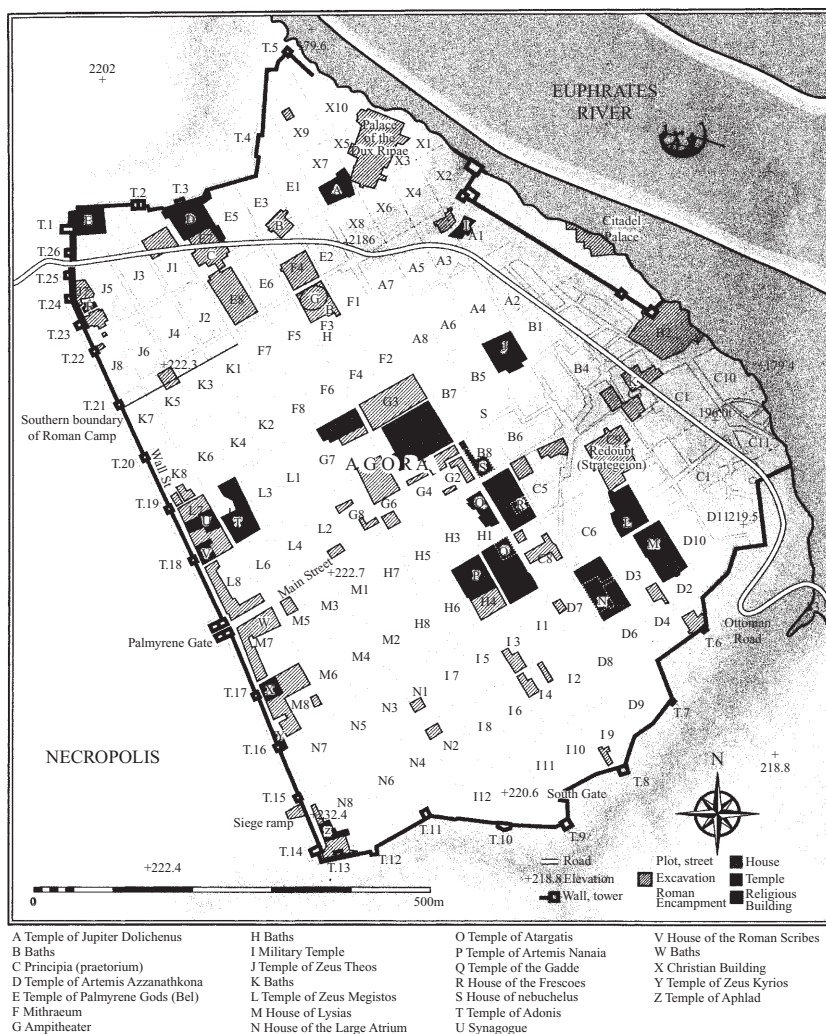


Figure 17. Plan of Dura-Europos. Site plan designed by John McCoy, after a plan by Simon James, after MFSED.

people not of Greek patrilineal extraction. The Greek citizens of Europos could therefore discriminate between themselves and other ethnicities by monitoring patrilineal ancestries. If Alexander's father was a Greek citizen, Alexander's Aramaic eponym would suggest that his immediate male

ancestors had taken wives of Syrian (Aramean/Assyrian) origin,⁶ thereby contributing to a self-defining Greek citizen group comprised of diverse bloodlines, conversant in Near Eastern cultural traditions, and receptive to alternative ethno-cultural identities.⁷

Nonetheless, the cultural background of Alexander Ammaios' mother is unknown, and this raises alternative possibilities for Alexander's Aramaic name. If Alexander was a Greek citizen whose immediate ancestors were Greek, he then perhaps received or assumed the name Ammaios despite having no kinship bonds to other ethnicities. Near Eastern cultural idioms perhaps became popular among Greeks of Europolis through generations of intermarriage or cultural interaction, and the name Ammaios could reflect this trend. Similarly, if Alexander was not a Greek citizen, his name suggests that Greek idioms had become popular among various ethnicities.

Given the many potential significations of Alexander's names, it is difficult to reconstruct the cultural dispositions of Dura-Europolis by the names and languages used in inscriptions, parchments, and papyri.⁸ Despite such challenges, this chapter posits that the settlement's Greek epigraphic and papyrus evidence illustrates two significant trends. First, during the Seleucid and Parthian periods, only ethnic Greeks were members of Dura-Europolis' Greek civic body. Since Greeks typically defined ethnic affiliation in terms of patrilineal transmission, the *Europaioi* conceived of ethnic Greeks as those tracing paternal ancestries to original Greco-Macedonian colonists and extended citizenship to them exclusively, even if such genealogies did not reflect real ancestry but were social constructs. As ethnic Greeks adopted Near Eastern cultural features and in certain cases intermarried with descendants of other ethnic populations, they still treated ethnic and civic Greek status as a meaningful possession that they controlled through marital strategies. That is, the Greeks of the Parthian imperial settlement engaged in innovative performances of Greekness by cultivating local traditions, but they marked key differences between themselves and members of other ethnicities with similar cultural traits. The second key trend is one

⁶ As the introduction notes, the terms Syrian, Assyrian, and in this period often Aramean described the same putative ethnicity (with Aramean being the Aramaic term). This chapter uses "Syrian."

⁷ As Pollard (2007) 93–99 correctly argues, names are not transparent reflections of ethnic or cultural identity, and many people may have had double names that they employed on a contextual basis. In general, when I posit ethnic or civic identifications, it is because an individual can be located in a discrete community (its members call themselves *Europaioi*, hold Greek civic offices, belong to a *hetairaia* of Anathenes, or belong to a Greek family attested through several generations, etc.). In this case, Alexander's official position as "herald of the city," which his father also held, indicates that he was a Greek citizen of Europolis. *TEAD* 7–8, nos. 867–69.

⁸ Kaizer (2009a); Gascou (2011) treat texts and languages at Dura-Europolis.

initiated by Roman imperial intervention. After Rome conquered Dura-Europos in the 160s CE, the Roman administration reorganized the Greek citizen body so that it incorporated local ethnics. In this way, the Roman conquest of Dura-Europos incited drastic changes in local expressions of civic Greekness.

Before pursuing such argumentation, it is important to clarify certain issues that the names of Alexander Ammaios raise. The general absence of surviving Seleucid- and early Parthian-era documents obscures whether *Europaioi* were descended from Seleucid settlers. Any claims of civic or ethnic continuity from the Seleucid period likely represent the strategic ploys of late Parthian imperial *Europaioi*, and names that appear in papyrus documents and inscriptions of varied social contexts, which can disguise routine use of bicultural double names, do not transparently indicate ethnicity.⁹ Nonetheless, the transmission of civic privileges and ethnic identifications among *Europaioi* throughout the Parthian (and perhaps Seleucid) period by putative paternal descent, which the scant early documents and relatively late texts verify, influenced the construction of ethnic cognition and civic affiliation. Although intermarriage and other forms of cultural exchange occurred among descendants of Greek settlers and various ethnics in ways preventing any positing of “racial” or “blood” difference, *Europaioi* still may have traced their patrilineal descent, fictively or not, to Greek settlers. This means that *Europaioi* and members of other ethnicities probably possessed shared genetic bloodlines and cultivated similar cultural forms. They perhaps in many instances boasted of Greek and Syrian ancestors, were multilingual, and had names of Greek, Aramaic, Babylonian, Arabic, or Persian origin. Despite such possibilities, putative patrilineal descent distinguished Greek citizen *Europaioi* from the rest.

Accordingly, although it is impossible to verify whether Parthian-era *Europaioi* were actual descendants of the settlement’s original Greco-Macedonian colonists, they apparently posited that this was so. Also, the practice of public scrutiny for citizen enrollment, which the emphasis on genealogy in civic documents and inscriptions suggests, probably imposed limits on how effective claims of Greek ethnicity could be established. As comparative evidence from classical Athenian litigation indicates, individuals’ status as the offspring of citizens was scrutinized by fellow citizens,

⁹ Pollard (2007) 89–100. By the late Parthian period, many *Europaioi* constructed themselves, fictively or not, as heirs to Seleucid Greek civic traditions by maintaining political offices and the status of *Europaioi*. These titles likely connoted Greek ethnicity, although Pollard significantly suggests that civic titles and Greek names could have connoted status. Like Pollard, I deem “ethnicity” a form of cognition and a rhetorical claim with social implications, not a fact.

often demesmen, before they could be registered as citizens. Such scrutiny was certainly fallible. Acceptance within the citizen community was in practice predicated upon social interactions and the recognition of peers who could verify proper identity, especially on a daily basis. Also, the scrutiny process could have been doctored or manipulated in ways that de-legitimated actual citizens or endowed usurpers with citizen rights.¹⁰ Still, the overall process of scrutiny had to be factored into the strategies that the settlement's inhabitants employed in their bids for authority, prestige, and status as civic insiders. If the boundary between citizen and non-citizen was permeable and possible to manipulate, this boundary still existed and was buttressed by scrutiny. If ethnicity was constructed, it was also shaped by contestation. Lineage and citizen transmission were conceivably monitored in such ways at Dura-Europos, despite the lack of explicit evidence.

The issue of onomastics raised by Alexander Ammaios poses another significant problem. The Parthian-era *Europaioi* almost always feature Greek names in archived documents or inscriptions. After the Romans conquered the city, Greek citizens increasingly assumed Aramaic, Arabic, or Persian names. This phenomenon's significance, however, is harder to gauge. Such documents, for instance, could disguise the existence of double names, with Greek names being used in more "civic" or "public" capacities. Also, people who conceived of themselves as Greeks could have assumed "Semitic," Babylonian, or Persian names, whereas holders of Greek ones may not have defined themselves as Greek at all.¹¹ Despite such issues, the preponderance of Greek names among the *Europaioi* during the Parthian period plausibly coincided with the extension of citizenship to ethnic Greeks through patrilineal descent. The scrutiny of citizenship and genealogies outlined above, which enabled the patrilineal transmission of the status of *Europaioi* to be monitored by civic authorities, would have kept in circulation the same Greek names. The tendency for the *Europaioi* to transmit names through generations could explain the marked differences in naming patterns between *Europaioi*, who inherited citizenship through patrilineal descent, and putative outsiders. In this context, such Greek names could have constituted for *Europaioi* markers of elite Greek status, but non-*Europaioi* could have occasionally adopted them for prestige value without making legitimate claims of Greekness. Likewise, when Syrians, Persians, Babylonians, or "Arabs," whether locals or veterans, earned citizenship in the Greek community (and Roman *colonia*) after the Roman

¹⁰ Dem., *Or.* 57; Lys., *Or.* 23 treat such issues.

¹¹ Pollard (2007) 89–100 stresses.

conquest, they probably introduced their familial naming patterns to the citizen body, and the transmission of Greek names as markers of Greek citizen status would have received less emphasis.¹² An exclusive and rigorously maintained Greek civic order endowing Greek names with connotations of citizen status no longer existed, and Greek citizens were increasingly inclined to assume Aramaic, Persian, or Arabic names.

As a result, this chapter hypothesizes that the Parthian-era *Europaioi* conceived of themselves as Greeks by ethnicity and scrutinized genealogies in ways ensuring the transmission of citizenship through patrilineal descent. Despite its flaws, lapses, and incapacities, this disposition hindered ethnic Babylonians, “Arabs,” Syrians or Persians from becoming citizens of the Greek civic order that the *Europaioi* maintained. This chapter also suggests that the preponderance of Greek names appearing in Greek documents or inscriptions of Parthian-era *Europaioi* was linked to this process. If these hypotheses are correct, Roman imperial intervention stimulated substantial transformations in who Greek citizens were and how Greekness was expressed. Given the sheer absence of Seleucid texts and the methodological problems just described, the significance of the settlement’s civic documents, inscriptions, and onomastics could be interpreted otherwise. Yet, what is presented below constitutes a plausible representation of the past.

The formation of Greek civic community in Seleucid and Parthian Dura-Europos

The socio-political and kinship structures of Seleucid and Parthian Dura-Europos differed drastically from those that emerged in contemporary Roman Syrian cities. Because these structures stimulated cultural performances and urban topographies that more characterized Seleucid and Parthian Greek communities than those of Roman Syria, this section establishes the basic contours of Dura-Europos’ Parthian-era social organization. By doing so, it enables subsequent parts to examine how the consolidation of ethnic divisions in the Seleucid and Parthian empires generated social distinctions among people who often cultivated the same cultural idioms. This chapter’s final sections then demonstrate how Roman imperial intervention stimulated the reformulation of Greek community and innovative modes of Greek performance.

¹² Yon (2004) 324: veterans and locals.

While complex, the use of double names such as Alexander Ammaios was certainly stimulated by the interaction of ethnic Greeks and members of Near Eastern ethnicities and societies. The production of a Greek civic body with Near Eastern ethnic and cultural ties at Dura-Europos, as it existed in Trajan's day, had its origins in a process spanning centuries. Seleucus I or his general Nicanor founded Dura-Europos as a *katoikia* in the 290s BCE. The settlement, paralleled by that at Jebel Khalid, constituted a citadel overlooking the Euphrates and the residences of *katoikoi* at its foot.¹³ The settlement's very name suggests its military importance. Europos, the name of a city in Macedon, was what Greco-Macedonians called their settlement, but *Dur* is a "Semitic" word meaning "fortress" and probably reflects how locals described the citadel.¹⁴ During the Seleucid and Parthian periods, the colony's Greek citizens were *Europaioi*, a term often used by the city's Greek inscriptions and papyrus documents. Under the Seleucids, Europos did not have *polis* status and constituted "royal land;" it had no dynastic epithet and none of the institutions of Seleucid polities.¹⁵ But during the mid-second century BCE, the colony's grid pattern, its *agora* (apparently primarily a marketplace), and perhaps its set of municipal and royal officials were established, and the settlement's nucleus thereby expanded westward from the fortress overlooking the Euphrates river and assumed more than a strictly military character.¹⁶

Despite the scarcity of evidence for the Seleucid-era settlement at Dura-Europos, the colony's *Europaioi* clearly acted as a distinct civic group whose members earned their status as *Europaioi* through patrilineal genealogy. A fragmentary deed of sale from the second century BCE describes a certain Aristonax, son of Ariston, as a *Europaaios*.¹⁷ It also indicates that the civic administration of Europos had labeled the settlement's land allotments (*klēroi*, which belonged to a larger land unit called an *ekas*) with the names of the Greco-Macedonian settlers to whom they had been

¹³ Leriche and al-Mahmoud (1997) 1–21; Leriche *et al.* (1997) 55–80; Leriche (1997b) 81–94, (1997d), (2003); Kosmin (2011), with comparison to Jebel Khalid.

¹⁴ Kaizer (2009a) 248 discusses the name and the reused cuneiform document attesting it.

¹⁵ Millar (1998a) 478–79 argues that Dura-Europos was a Greek community even if its temples followed Near Eastern models. But Downey (2000) 160; (2004a) 42, 55 stresses that no theaters or gymnasia are known.

¹⁶ Leriche and al-Mahmoud (1997) 1–21; Leriche *et al.* (1997) 55–80; Leriche (1997b) 81–94, (1997d), (2003); Kosmin (2011) discuss the second-century expansion to a gridded "city." But Hannestad (2012) 992 maintains the traditional view that the grid existed in early Dura-Europos. Coqueugniot (2011): recent excavations and analysis of the *agora*.

¹⁷ *P. Dura* 15.3. The excavated "archival building" was apparently constructed around the mid-second century BCE, but civic documents were perhaps issued previously elsewhere. Leriche (1997a), esp. 160–61. Additional epigraphic evidence for archives in Seleucid/Parthian territory are *IGSK* 65.126, 130, 192 (Nippur, Uruk, and Susa).

distributed at the settlement's inception. Even if allotments were legally transferable by Parthian times, this feature still possibly enabled settlers' descendants to trace, whether fictively or not, their genealogies to original Greco-Macedonian colonists and their land allotments. This fixation on genealogy and its link to *Europaioi* status, which Parthian-era civic documents and inscriptions reflect, suggests that a process of public scrutiny helped map patrilineal descent and citizen enrollment in ways consistent with limited testimony from other Greek colonies of Seleucid origin.¹⁸ Putative Greek genealogies that endured scrutiny cohered with certain civic and cultural performances to affirm that individuals were legitimate Greek citizens.

In the later second century BCE, Dura-Europos, which the Seleucids apparently had never made a *polis*, fell under Parthian control. Under the Parthians, Dura-Europos retained many of its late-Seleucid municipal organs, but it lacked key civic structures and topographical features of contemporary Greek *poleis* in Roman Syria. Moreover, by the Roman occupation in the 160s CE, the *agora*, which originated under Seleucid rule, had become overrun with shops.¹⁹ This suggests that Europos' civic administrators did not secure what had initially been framed as civic spaces and allowed various kinship groups or individuals to claim them. Elite families working in isolation and without focal points of competition built and maintained consecrated spaces and temples meaningful to them and their kinsmen. House and temple architecture in Dura-Europos followed many Mesopotamian conventions and conduced to an "exclusive environment" that served "relatively independent communities" rather than a "hierarchically interconnected citizenry."²⁰ Accordingly, the building projects that defined the civic topography were products of kinship-oriented efforts, and they were often isolated from the views of outsiders by walls or porticoes.

Parthian imperial Dura-Europos was thereby speckled with houses, shops, and temples erected through disparate activity. Likewise, while

¹⁸ Papyrus and epigraphic documents often trace Greek lineage for several generations. *TEAD* 3, no. 157, for example. Evidence of public scrutiny in Seleucid colonies is *OGIS* 229.45–55, 101, which enjoined *grammateis* of Magnesia on the Sipylus to produce documentation (*graphē*) proving the Greek status of the colony's members and deposit it in a *grammatophylakis*. Invernizzi (1997), (2004); Messina (2006): the royal Seleucid archive at Seleucia on the Tigris.

¹⁹ Butcher (2003) 259; Coqueugniot (2011).

²⁰ Wharton (1996) 26–28. Temple complexes usually followed known Mesopotamian patterns, with a *naos* constituting three *adyta*. Entrances were aligned to enable sight into complexes' courtyards but not their *naos*. *TEAD* 3, 4–13, 18–24: temples of Artemis and Atargatis. Houses possessed anterooms preventing outsiders from gazing inside, unlike Roman or Greek houses. Allara (2002) 206–19; now Baird (2011), esp. 238–39.

many contemporary inscriptions constituted dedications to gods, honorific inscriptions and statues commemorating euergetic acts, which typified Greek cities in Roman imperial Syria, are noticeably absent.²¹ In contemporary Roman Syria, institutions of elites cooperated or mobilized their competitive networks to create architecturally integrative urban topographies that were physically accessible and visible to citizen audiences. But in Parthian Dura-Europos, no such civic council existed. For this reason, the settlement's resident ethnicities, such as the Greeks, Palmyrenes, and Anathenes, established their own places of worship, dedicated them to their traditional gods, and frequented them in relatively exclusive ways.²² When Jews and Christians established places of worship in the Roman-era city, they behaved in similar fashions.

Amid shifting imperial contexts, Dura-Europos and its administration adapted to the socio-political framework of Parthian intervention and to the steppe zone's dimorphic context, even if many elements of previous Seleucid structures persisted. Under the Parthians, the settlement, which contemporary inscriptions describe as "*polis*," was governed formally by a "general and overseer of the city." This was likely a position of late-Seleucid origin that notable Greco-Macedonian families empowered by the Parthian administration usually held or even inherited.²³ An inscription attesting a "general and overseer" also to be *genearchēs* (leader of *genē*) suggests that the Parthian administration conceived of the Greek *Europaioi* as one privileged ethnicity dwelling among many other "tribes" or kinship groups with ties to local nomads, even if these same Greeks conceptualized themselves as members of a discrete civic community.²⁴ Dura-Europos' "general and overseer" and *genearchēs* may have in fact been Parthia's regional administrator and therefore governor of local ethnicities.²⁵ The material evidence

²¹ Butcher (2003) 261.

²² Such ethnic segmentation coincided with how families transmitted cult maintenance through generations. Leriche (1997c), Dirven (2004), now Kaizer (2009b). In the Parthian period, the Palmyrenes maintained temples for Bel outside Dura-Europos' walls and for the Gaddē within them. Dirven (1999) 190.

²³ Kosmin (2011) 102.

²⁴ Sommer (2005a) 297–99. Cumont (1926) no. 52; *TEAD* 6, 411–12: the inscription of Seleukos, son of Lysias. Seleucus' family often held the post during the first and second centuries CE. Positions with identical titles in other parts of Parthia and nearby kingdoms appear in *IGSK* 65.64 (Nineveh), 102 (Babylon), 147 (Tylos in Mesene). Arnaud (1986) 146–48 stresses the lack of a *boulē* and Parthian-era attestations for a *stratēgos kai epistatēs*.

²⁵ Sommer (2004a) 160–65; (2005a) 296–302, who sees this transformation as reflecting deviation from a Greek stratum. Sommer also posits that the post of *genearchēs* was like that of *arabarchēs*, through which leading *Europaioi* oversaw "Arab tribes" of Parapotamia, both settled and nomadic. This post however was held after Trajan's invasions by the Parthian administrator Manesos. *P. Dura* 20 (121 CE). Fowler (2010): Parthian administration.

for Dura-Europos during the Parthian period indicates scarce contact with the Mediterranean region and modest interaction with Roman Syria.²⁶ Extant papyrus documents and inscriptions reveal that a community of Greco-Macedonian families, which sometimes even practiced endogamy to prevent intermarriage with outsiders, controlled Dura-Europos' civic offices, performed most of its official regulatory functions, and acted as its primary representatives before the Parthian king and, perhaps, as Parthia's regional magistrates.²⁷

Before the Romans occupied Dura-Europos in the 160s CE, the only people who appear as *Europaioi* in the inscriptions and papyrus documents of the Parthian-era settlement have Greco-Macedonian names, as do their patrilineal ancestors. The single possible exception occurs in a loan document involving the sons of the *Europaioi* Polemokrates, the son of a man named Demetrios and the grandson of another Polemokrates. While the names Polemokrates and Demetrios are Greek, the sons of Polemokrates were "Demetrios, who is called Nabousamaos," a "Seleukos" whose alias is missing, and another son who is listed as "Zabdouas" but whose Greek name is lost.²⁸ Since Polemokrates and his father Demetrios, as *Europaioi*, were Greek citizens by patrilineal descent, it is likely that Polemokrates' sons adopted Aramaic, Babylonian, or Arabic names or received them because previous generations had intermarried with other ethnicities. They perhaps had common bonds and identities with other ethnic populations while still having Greek civic and ethnic status through putative patrilineal descent. Otherwise, those who were not Greek citizens were often called "those from (*apo*) Europos" or were linked to nearby villages. For instance, in the village (*komē*) Ossa near Europos during the early second century CE, "Aththaios, son of Akarabanes, son of Zabidlaos, of those from there (Ossa)" received a loan from "Lysias, son of Abbouis, of those from (*apo*) Europos."²⁹ Although Lysias had a Greek name, his father's name and his designation as "one of those from Europos" shows that he was not a *Europaioi*, not a civic or ethnic Greek insider.

The tendency for *Europaioi* to use Greco-Macedonian names and patronyms during the Parthian period and Aramaic, Arabic, or Persian

²⁶ Mesopotamian green glassware outnumbers Roman examples of Eastern Sigillata A and suggests that even if Dura-Europos was within a Syrian-Parthian regional economy, it had limited contacts with the Mediterranean. Similar statements apply to Roman coins. Pollard (2004) 121–22, 124–25, 144.

²⁷ Arnaud (1997) 140–43 discusses intermarriage.

²⁸ *P. Dura* 19.2–3, which later mentions sons named Nikanor and Antiochos. One was perhaps Zabdouas. Saliou (1992) 70.

²⁹ *P. Dura* 23 (134 CE).

names under the Romans can be interpreted in different ways. Perhaps people not of Greek origin had become citizens and assumed Greek names under the Parthians, whereas Greeks increasingly assumed Aramaic, Arabic, or Persian ones under the Romans. Still, the simplest explanation for these two trends is that under the Seleucids and Parthians, Greek citizenship was strictly regulated and defined by recognized patrilineal descent from the colony's Greco-Macedonian settlers, even if such ethnic genealogies constituted fictive rhetorical claims. This explanation is supported by the tendency for families of Parthian-era *Europaioi* to intermarry and document patrilineal genealogy. Because of such trends, Greek names bore prestige value in the settlement, with *Europaioi* almost never assuming, say, Aramaic or Persian ones (at least in official documents) and with Syrians or Persians sometimes assuming Greek ones. Roman intervention then disrupted this trend by prompting the Greek community to extend citizenship to many people originating from other ethnicities who transmitted such citizen privileges to their children. In this context, Aramaic, Arabic, or Persian names became much more popular and prestigious within the settlement's ethnically heterogeneous Greek citizen body.

The temples and dedications of Parthian-era Dura-Europos

The likelihood that *Europaioi* regulated citizenship in such distinctive ways during Parthian and Roman intervention clarifies how the Greeks and other ethnicities of Dura-Europos located significant ethnic, cultural, and civic difference. The fact that contemporary citizens of Seleucia on the Tigris maintained identifications as Greeks further supports that the Parthian-era *Europaioi* did so too,³⁰ and Greeks and Near Eastern ethnics significantly used the different names of Europos and Dura to describe the same landscape.³¹ These terms denoted two distinct civic affiliations: that of the *Europaioi* and that of the other ethnicities, social groups, or even "diaspora" communities of Dura.³² Yet, what many residents labeled "Dura" may have been a collection of ethnic groups or villages whose shared

³⁰ Josephus, *AJ* 18.371–79; *PAT* 0270=CIS 2.3, 3924=IGLS 17.1.24 ([*Hellēn*]es/ynny' dedicated).

³¹ Isidore of Charax, *Mansiones Parthicae* 1 (*GGM* 1.248). Isidore describes Dura-Europos as Dura of Nicanor, notes that Macedonians founded it, and states that Greeks called it Europos. He therefore indicates that Syrians labeled it Dura, but Greek *Europaioi* Europos. Isidore arguably references self-defining Greek communities by noting that they were Macedonian foundations, Greek *poleis*, or called a certain name "by Greeks." On Isidore, see Gawlikowski (1988) 77–80. Palmyrenes (see below) and Safaitic inscriptions (MacDonald (2004) 120–21) used "Dura."

³² Sommer (2004b) construes the Jews, Palmyrenes, and, eventually, Roman military presence in terms of diaspora.

lack of Greek citizenship stimulated common recognition and frequent networking. It may not have been a perceived “community,” and people that Greeks defined almost interchangeably as Syrian, Aramean, or Assyrian perhaps constituted numerous distinct ethnic or social groups, such as the Palmyrenes and the Anathenes. Despite this, these groups integrated Greek idioms into their social performances in ways that demonstrated their commonality with the city’s other ethnic or social elements and located key differences between themselves and *Europaioi*.

While Greeks, Syrians, and other ethnic or social communities shared many cultural idioms, cultic practices, or divine iconographies, their cults’ rites and locations were still charged with ethnically exclusive connotations that solidified civic divisions between *Europaioi* and other ethnicities. Inscriptions raised by individuals whose social affiliations can be determined by criteria other than mere onomastic evidence demonstrate this pattern.³³ While many who appear in inscriptions with “Semitic” names could also have possessed Greek names and *Europaioi* status not expressed in surviving evidence, the documents described below represent contexts in which collective ethnic or social affiliations distinct from that of Greek *Europaioi* were being articulated. Individuals acting within these contexts could have belonged to multiple ethnicities or social groups (including *Europaioi*), but this section nonetheless investigates social contexts in which “non-Greek” ethnic or social performances and communities were shaped. It focuses on Dura-Europos’ temples, in which elite display, village or ethnic affiliations, or citizen performances informed cult practice and spatial organization, just as in temples elsewhere in the Roman and Parthian Near East.³⁴

The sanctuary for Aphlad offers evidence suggesting ethnically segmented cult practices and places of worship, even if diverse ethnic or social elements frequented the site to worship its god.³⁵ In fact, the villagers of Anath who settled in Dura-Europos recast Greek traditions as they integrated them into their performances of Anathene ethnicity and cult. During the 50s CE, (H)Adadiabos, son of Zabdibolos commissioned an inscribed relief in which he boasted of dedicating a part of a sanctuary to Aphlad, his village’s god. His relief showed Aphlad in Parthian-style dress, wearing a Near Eastern *polos*, and standing on two eagle griffons (Figure 18). Beside the god, Adadiabos was depicted sacrificing, and he

³³ Dirven (2011a) 203. Combined evidence distinguishes Palmyrenes, Anathenes, and Hatrenes.

³⁴ Likewise, Butcher (2011) on Niha in Lebanon. Leriche, Coqueugniot, and Pontbriand (2011): recent archaeology of Dura-Europos’ temples.

³⁵ Likewise Kaizer (2009b) 162–63. Downey (1988) 110–12 treats temple.



Figure 18. Cult stele of the god Aphlad, 1932.1213.

wore the pointed hat and tunic typifying priests of contemporary Syria. The relief likely dates to *c.* 54 CE, when an association (*hetaireia*) from the same village dedicated a dining room for men (*andrōn*) to Aphlad for the health of the *strategos* Seleukos and his son. The dedicators were from six families; all had Aramaic or Arabic names, and one was the same Adadiabos, son of Zabdibolos who produced the relief just described.³⁶ The villagers of Anath had adopted the Greek concepts of *hetaireia* and *andrōn* presumably to describe their ritual dining, but they deployed these concepts within discrete performances of Anathene social affiliation and cult. *Europaioi* perhaps came to the *andrōn* to worship, as additional Greek inscriptions suggest.³⁷ The Anathenes nonetheless conducted their rites exclusively as a group, a *hetaireia*.³⁸

Middling individuals also expressed their devotion to Aphlad within the *andrōn*; terracotta offerings or pictograms sufficed. A certain Abbouis, son of Lysanias drew pictograms of himself and his father in the niche holding the cult image of Aphlad. The pictograms were arranged so that the two figures, dressed in long robes and trousers, faced the image of the divinity with a gesture of adoration. Directly on top of the pictograms was inscribed in Greek, “May Abbouis, son of Lysani[as], son of Som[a]lakos be remembered before the god Aphlad.” Since the name Abouis appears in the dedicatory inscription that the *hetaireia* of Anathenes had raised, it is possible that the relatively uncommon name Ab[b]ouis was frequently used by Anathenes and that Abbouis, son of Lysanias was worshipping the patron divinity of the Anathene villagers with whom he shared kinship bonds.³⁹ If so, Abbouis was engaging in an Anathene cult performance that distinguished him from Greek *Europaioi*, and his drawings visibly produced and enacted his ethnic, social, and cultic affiliations.

Even as members of various ethnicities or social entities cultivated Greek cultural idioms, they “borrowed” such idioms in ways that endowed cult

³⁶ *TEAD* 5, 106–16 generally, with nos. 416–18. The members of the *hetaireia* consisted of two sons of Rhachimnaios, two of Zabdibolos, three of Phalazzacheis, and two of Zabidadados. Otherwise, the inscription includes the names of Rhoumes, son of Ochchanos, and Nabousamdos, son of Abemmes.

³⁷ *TEAD* 5, nos. 429, 433, likely Parthian-era, were left by *Europaioi* named Alexander and Xenokrates. These trace their patrilineal lines to their grandfather and great-grandfather. The Seleukos, son of Apolophanes of an additional inscription perhaps belonged to the “great Seleucus-Lysanias” family that dominated civic offices, and he may also appear in an inscription of 123 CE. *TEAD* 5, no. 421; Cumont (1926) no. 76.

³⁸ Kaizer (2009b) 163 formulates.

³⁹ *TEAD* 5, no. 426. The Lysias, son of Abbouis described as “one of those from/away from (*apo*) Europolis” in *P. Dura* 23 (134 CE) is perhaps the son of this Abbouis. If so, Abbouis was not a *Europaioi*.



Figure 19. Cult relief of the Gad of Dura, 1938.5314. From left: Hairanes, *Gad/Tychē* of Dura, and Seleucus I. Dura-Europos Collection.

rites and spaces with connotations of ethnic and civic differentiation. In 159 CE, a Palmyrene named Hairanes (*hym*) dedicated two reliefs with Palmyrenean inscriptions in the *naos* of the temple of the Gaddē. He also inscribed his name and patronym in Greek on their top borders.⁴⁰ Hairanes' reliefs may reflect a familial pattern of conferring benefactions or serving as priests for this recently established temple; his father had dedicated its *pronaos*.⁴¹ According to their inscriptions, one relief featured the *Gad* or *Tychē* of Dura seated between Seleucus I Nicator, who crowned him, and Hairanes himself, who performed an incense sacrifice. On another relief, he portrayed the *Gad* or *Tychē* of Palmyra standing on a river deity and beside a lion, with Hairanes and an image of *Nikē* on her flanks (Figures 19–20). Many words describe the culturally eclectic idioms that

⁴⁰ *TEAD* 7–8, nos. 902–3, 907–8, Pl. 33–34=*PAT* 1094–98=*Doura* 28–32=Bertolino (2004) 24–5; Dirven (1999) 229–33, from the complex's "fourth" and final phase.

⁴¹ *TEAD* 7–8, no. 911=*PAT* 1104=*Doura* 38=Bertolino (2004) 26–7, from a niche of the *pronaos*' façade in Palmyrenean. Dirven (1999) 229.



Figure 20. Relief of the goddess of Palmyra, 1938.5313. From left: Hairanes, *Gad/Tychē* of Palmyra, and *Nikē*.

adorned these likenesses. For present purposes, it should suffice to state the two following observations. First, the reliefs emphasized the frontal portrayal of hierarchically arranged images, not the classicizing naturalism conventional of Greek art. Second, Hairanes wore a Greek *himation* and a hat typical of contemporary priests of the Near East, and the *Gad/Tychē* had the same features as most *Tychai* of contemporary Greek communities of Syria. Yet, the *Gad/Tychē* was accompanied by a lion that typified certain Near Eastern goddesses of the post-Alexander periods.

At first glance, Hairanes' reliefs suggest that he shared many points of cultural commonality with the settlement's Greek *Europaioi*. First, Hairanes' depiction of Seleucus I as crowning the divine manifestation of Dura indicates that many Syrians and members of other ethnicities or social groups, like the Greek *Europaioi*, classified themselves as members of a settlement founded by Seleucus I. The Greeks and other ethnicities shared the same

royal founder, whom they incorporated into their distinct cult practices.⁴² Likewise, the *Gad/Tychē* of Dura bore iconographic similarities to Zeus Megistos, a deity of the Greek *Europaioi* inhabiting what was once, but is no longer, believed to be a temple of Seleucid origin.⁴³ Zeus Megistos was a Greek god easily associated with the Canaanite deity Baal-shamin, and local residents sometimes referenced the same divine manifestation with the names Zeus and Baal-shamin, as the example of Seleukos demonstrates below.

Despite such cultural confluences, the reliefs' themes also highlight how the *Europaioi* and members of alternative ethnicities or social affiliations located significant differences even while cultivating similar cultural forms. First, Hairanes' likeness of the *Gad/Tychē* of Palmyra referenced his Palmyrene affiliations, thereby locating him in a specific ethnicity or social community residing in the settlement and participating in common cult rites. Equally as important, although the Palmyrenes' representation of the *Gad* of Dura and the *Europaioi*'s likeness of Zeus Megistos had nearly identical iconography, Hairanes and his fellow Palmyrenes may have conceived of them as different gods or culturally distinction variations of one.⁴⁴ In fact, Near Eastern societies often used male divinities to personify Fortune (*Gad*), but Greeks typically conceptualized their *Tychē* as a female deity.⁴⁵ Such divergences reflect that Hairanes and his fellow-worshippers had recast the iconography of a significant Greek divinity worshipped by *Europaioi* in ways that expressed difference from *Europaioi*. They had dis-embedded the iconography of Zeus Megistos from its previous contexts of signification and transformed it into the visual image of the *Gad* of the Palmyrenes of Dura. As a result, their veneration of this male *Gad* distinguished them from contemporary *Europaioi* for two reasons. First, the *Europaioi* likely worshipped as their *Tychē* a female divinity resembling Artemis, not Zeus Megistos. Second, although the Greeks and members of other ethnicities perhaps worshipped Zeus Megistos, the Greek *Europaioi* defined him exclusively as Zeus Megistos and not also as the *Gad/Tychē* that Palmyrenes of "Dura" worshipped.⁴⁶

⁴² The Greek *Europaioi* had a cult to Seleucus I. *P. Dura* 25.19–20 lists a certain Danyinos, son of Seleukos, son of Danyinos, as the priest of "King Seleukos Nikator."

⁴³ Downey (1987) 30–32; (1988) 83, 92–93; (1995) 241–50; (2004a); (2004b) 156–57, 161; (2004c) 122–24 treats temple, excavations, and putative dating.

⁴⁴ Dirven (1999) 112–19 emphasizes Zeus Olympios/Megistos, whereas previous scholars stressed Baal-shamin.

⁴⁵ Kaizer (1997) 147–66; (1998) 33–62 examines the male *Gad* and its association with *Tychē*.

⁴⁶ After the Romans occupied Dura-Europos, the *Tychē* of Dura-Europos was a female divinity with a mural crown, much like the civic *Tychē* of Greek cities in Roman Syria. At the temple of the

Likewise, at the so-called temple of Zeus Kyrios in 31 CE, a man who called himself Seleukos in Greek and *b[r']th* in Aramaic dedicated, with his son Ababouis (*'bbwby*), a relief to a bearded god that he named Zeus Kyrios and Baal-shamin (*b'l šmyn*)⁴⁷ (Figure 21). Seleukos' dedication exhibits diverse and complex cultural interweavings, but its integration into the ethnically exclusive cult rites of Palmyrenes or Anathenes endowed it most with social significance.⁴⁸ Seleukos' use of Greek and Aramaic names for his patron divinity indicates that he did not distinguish between Zeus and Baal-shamin and had collapsed two culturally distinct gods into a single divine manifestation that patronized Palmyrenes or Anathenes of Dura. He had integrated the Greek and Aramaic names of Zeus and Baal-shamin, just like his own double names, into a discretely local framework of signification underpinned by the shared cult performances of an ethnic or social community. His Greek and Aramaic names, along with his Greek clothing and expensive divine relief, framed him as an elite figure in his community of Palmyrenes or Anathenes. In this specific context, Seleukos thereby used Greek (and Aramaic) symbols to articulate difference from the settlement's Greeks, whatever other social affiliations he had.

The evidence presented so far indicates that specific ethnicities, kinship groups, or social communities established and maintained temples or shrines. Despite such segmentation, outsiders could still worship within them in various capacities. As described above, inscriptions attest that *Europaioi* visited the *andrōn* at the sanctuary of Aphlad, without necessarily engaging in the rites of Anathenes. Similar cases cohering with this trend rely more heavily on onomastic evidence and are therefore more tenuous, but they are still worth noting. For instance, a family whom onomastics suggests were *Europaioi* had by 31–32 CE built the temple of Atargatis whose cult relief famously bore images of Atargatis, Hadad, and the *sēmeion* mentioned in the introduction. But people of diverse ethnic

Palmyrene gods (Cumont (1926) no. 8, Pl. 49–51), soldiers of the city's Roman garrison worshipped the female likenesses of the *Tychē* of Dura and the *Tychē* of Palmyra. It is therefore likely that under the Parthians, *Europaioi* venerated a female *Tychē* and Syrians worshipped a male *Gad/Tychē*, but after ethnic Syrians increasingly joined the Greek civic community through Roman imperial intervention, the female *Tychē* formerly serving as the female manifestation of Greek Europos became the civic community's divine personification.

⁴⁷ TEAD 7–8, no. 915, Pl. 37=PAT 1089=Doura 23=Bertolino (2004) 42–3; Dirven (1999) 210–19. Zeus Kyrios/Baal-shamin may not have been the temple's primary deity, as Dirven (220–21) states.

⁴⁸ TEAD 7–8, no. 914a; Dirven (1999) 211–12. Seleukos uses Palmyrenean, but a certain Rhoumes established the temple's altar shortly before Lysias' dedication. This is probably the Rhoumes, son of Ochchanos from the sanctuary of Aphlad's *betaireia* of Anathenes.



Figure 21. Cult relief of Zeus Kyrios-Baalshamin, 1935.45.

origin implemented ritual practices in select spaces of the sanctuary.⁴⁹ A *hetaireia* of people mostly bearing Aramaic or Arabic names built an *andrōn*

⁴⁹ *TEAD* 3, Pl. 14 contains relief. Ammonios, son of Apollophanes made a dedication that was likely the *naos* (31/32 CE). Cumont (1926) no. 85 (from *naos*); Downey (1988) 103–104. He also financed the erection of its *phalloi* (34/35 CE). His daughter owned seats in the temple's *pronaos* (61 CE), and his grandson Lysanias, son of Seleukos, son of Ammonios, son of Apollophanes dedicated a new

there in 37 CE.⁵⁰ Although these inscriptions indicate ethnically or socially segmented rituals, rooms, or times of cult performance, they also indicate that Greeks and Syrians could worship the same gods in the same sanctuary complexes. Indeed, at the temple of Artemis, which a family of Parthian-era *Europaioi* seems to have established, locals whose names suggest that they were not *Europaioi* made dedications, established chapels, and acted as priests of cult rites within them.⁵¹

If ethnic or civic segmentation characterized male cult performance, women apparently behaved differently. For instance, one of the two temple units for the sanctuary of Azzanathkona housed another divinity that villagers from Anath introduced, as the second element of her name suggests. People unlikely to be *Europaioi* accordingly established many of its chapels during the first and second centuries CE.⁵² Yet, in a trend also attested for the temples of Artemis and Atargatis, with whom some dedications associated Azzanathkona, women possessed seats in a *pronaos* organized as a *salle à gradins* (W9).⁵³ In all three temples, most women and their male kin had Greco-Macedonian names, but some had names of alternative origin, and no clear differentiation according to citizenship or ethnicity seems to

chapel and doors in the sanctuary (92 CE). Cumont (1926) no. 87; Frye *et al.* (1955) 129, no. 1; *TEAD* 3, no. 157. Lucian, *Syr. D.* 28–29 attests *phalloi* at the temple of Atargatis in Hierapolis-Manbog. In 92, a certain Nikanor, son of Dionysios dedicated a room along the main court. *TEAD* 3, no. 159.

⁵⁰ Over a dozen *synetairoi* (members of the *hetaireia*) are listed. The founders were Zebidis and Rhachimnaios, and the *archetairos* (overseer of the *hetaireia*) was Nourgatos. Also, in 69/70 CE, Abbas, son of Abbas dedicated an altar in the court before the temple. Frye *et al.* (1955) 129–30, 137, nos. 2 (reused in wall between rooms 9 and 10), 4.

⁵¹ Downey (1988) 89–92; *TEAD* 6, 397–404 treat origins and stages. *TEAD* 6, 397, 411–12 (with Cumont (1926) no. 52) indicates that the *stratēgos* and *genearchēs* Seleukos made an inscription into a column of the *pronaos* that can be dated to 33/32 BCE. Downey (2000) 160 dismisses any Seleucid dating; Leriche, Coqueugniot, and Pontbriand (2011) 28 affirm early Parthian dating. *TEAD* 3, nos. 152–53, 164 attest dedications and activity of men with Greek and Syrian names. Most women's names inscribed in *pronaos* had Greco-Macedonian names, although the earliest is that of Imaboua, daughter of Salammes, wife of Beloobassaros, and Mekatnanaia, daughter of Papias, wife of Zebidadados (7–6 BCE). Cumont (1926) no. 57.

⁵² Downey (1988) 99–101 treats the sanctuary's two units. The *pronaos'* (W9) earliest inscription, bearing a Greek name, is from 12/13 CE (*TEAD* 5, no. 545). In 33 CE, Rhechimnaios, son of Boumaios made an offering to Azzanathkona there. In 153 CE, Heliodoros, son of Theodoros, called Samsbanas, son of Abidsomos built a room. The Aramaic and theophoric Greek names of the dedicator and his father (without any claim of being *Europaioi*) suggest Syrian ethnic descent. In 161 CE, Barnabous, son of Zabidkonos, son of Rhaibelos dedicated a chapel "in the precinct of Artemis, to Artemis, the goddess called Azzanathkona." *TEAD* 5, nos. 504 (W9); 468 (W12); 453, found in room D8 near the doorway of room D9. Also, the graffiti of room W7 features mostly Aramaic names. *TEAD* 5, nos. 454–62. A room at the temple of Adonis was likewise established by a group of eight people of apparently common non-Greek ethnic origin (153 CE). *TEAD* 7–8, no. 871.

⁵³ At least one dedicator used both the names Artemis and Azzanathkona to describe the goddess. *TEAD* 5, no. 453. A votive plaque discovered at the threshold of the *naos* and *pronaos* of the temple shows Azzanathkona accompanied by lions, and her likeness resembles that of Atargatis from the temple of Atargatis in the same city, except she is not with Hadad. *TEAD* 5, Pl. 14.

have occurred.⁵⁴ The seats were simply transmitted from a woman to her female descendants, and intermarriage was widely practiced among or even within the Greco-Macedonian families who owned seats in these rooms.⁵⁵ While the cults of Artemis, Atargatis, and Azzanathkona may have differed in terms of the ethnicities that established them and regulated their priest-hoods, women of diverse ethnic backgrounds apparently participated in common rituals within these temples' *pronaos*, then structured as *salles aux gradins*. At Dura-Europos, the activity of such women in such temples may have helped bring cohesion to an otherwise socially divided population.⁵⁶

Such common veneration of divinities among women, which cut through ethnic and civic divisions, did not totally efface them. As an inscription of 34 CE shows, Megisto, the daughter of Themnestos, and her daughter Adaia possessed seats in a *pronaos* (W9) of the sanctuary of Azzanathkona, and they explicitly boasted of being *Europaiai*.⁵⁷ These women also owned seats at the temple of Artemis, where they did not use such a designation.⁵⁸ They may have been emphasizing that they were Greek *Europaiai* in the sanctuary of Azzanathkona, which Anathenes had likely established shortly before, while they did not perceive any need to do so in the temple of Artemis, which Greek benefactors and priests apparently established and maintained. The inscription from the temple of Artemis also shows that Megisto was both the wife (*gynē*) and sister (*homopatria adelpha*) of her brother/husband Antiochos and that Adaia was the offspring of this union. Despite her participating with Syrian women in the rites of a temple maintained by Syrians, Megisto's family had resorted to a marriage between either biological or adopted siblings.⁵⁹ Even as Greeks and Syrians assumed diverse cultural idioms that different ethnicities cultivated, shared cultural attributes and cult participation did not correlate to ethnic or civic sameness. Endogamy helped ensure such differentiation.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ *TEAD* 5, nos. 510–55: women at the temple of Azzanathkona. Cumont (1926) nos. 57–84, 85–121: women at the temples of Artemis and Atargatis, with some dedications of men.

⁵⁵ Arnaud (1997) 117–43 describes the *pronaos*' (W9) material development and reconstructs the genealogies of the women involved.

⁵⁶ Cumont (1926) no. 57: 7 BCE, Iamboua, daughter of Salamnes and wife of Beloobassaros, and Mekatmanaia, daughter of Papias and wife of Zebidadados, the temple of Artemis; Cumont (1926) no. 114: 61 CE, Rhigoutai, daughter of Rhageadados and wife of Sarga, the temple of Atargatis. *TEAD* 5, no. 522: 159 CE, Salammarā, daughter of Rhageibelos and wife of Makchisaio, son of Salainos, son of Macchisaio, the temple of Azzanathkona.

⁵⁷ *TEAD* 5, no. 544. ⁵⁸ Cumont (1926) nos. 64–65.

⁵⁹ Huebner (2007) 40–49 argues that sibling marriages in Egypt consisted of unions between natural and adopted offspring. But see Remijsen and Clarysse (2008).

⁶⁰ Onomastics suggest that Dura-Europos' Near Eastern ethnics too practiced sibling marriage. A seat in the temple of Artemis (first century CE) was inscribed "of Salamboua, daughter of Zobion, wife and sister by the same father of Antaios, son of Zobion." Cumont (1926) no. 68.

Roman-era Dura-Europos and civic integration

The Romans' occupation of Dura-Europos in the 160s transformed the civic-cultic culture just described, and it did so in part by altering the constituent components of the Greek citizen body. The extension of Greek citizenship beyond the boundaries of Greek ethnicity undermined the civic distinction between Greeks and other ethnicities and reoriented what previously had been segmented symbolic systems. It thereby produced a context of civic discourse and performance in which Greeks and members of alternative ethnicities meaningfully participated. Shortly after conquering the city, the Roman administration conferred upon Europos the rank of Greek *polis* and some decades later of Roman colony.⁶¹ *Europaioi* and *Douranoi* were thereafter used almost interchangeably for citizens of the Greek *polis* and, eventually, the Roman colony. Just as in other Greek polities of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*, the Greek citizens established a *boulē*, which convened in a *salle à gradins* that was eventually integrated into the southeast end of the expanded sanctuary of Artemis. This council began to erect honorific inscriptions for peers and governors.⁶²

Amid such trends, the civic council enrolled people of diverse ethnic origin, whether veterans or locals. Although widespread use of Aramaic, Arabic, or Persian names among Greek citizens reflects a shifting emphasis in self-presentation during this period, it also indicates changes in who earned citizen status or membership in the newly established civic council. Accordingly, a document from 180 CE lists residents named Ariabazos, Abidginaios, Ortonopatos, Mokeimos, and Zobaïos, otherwise unknown, as *Europaioi*.⁶³ Decades later, several *Douranoi* councilors signed a Greek bill of sale involving the affairs of a "son of Zebida," who intriguingly verified in Aramaic his intentions to sell property. One of the council's members was the "son of Rhechomneos," an indication that Syrians and other local ethnics had been integrated into the civic body and the *boulē* at this stage.⁶⁴

⁶¹ *P. Dura* 32 (254 CE) provides the earliest unambiguous attestation of colonial status.

⁶² For the creation of a *boulē*, colonial status, and the stages for establishing a *bouleutērion* (*salle à gradins*) beside or at the sanctuary of Artemis, all epigraphically attested after the Roman conquest, see Leriche (1999), (2001) 113–15; Leriche and El Ajji (1999), esp. 1328–41. At the *bouleutērion*, the "*boulē* of the *Europaioi*" honored with an inscription and statue (early third century) Septimius Aurelius Lysias, the last attested *Europaioi* to be *stratēgos kai epistatēs* (Leriche and El Ajji (1999) 1322). In the courtyard, a statue was dedicated to Julia Domna (ca. 212–17 CE) by the "*boulē* of the *Aurēlianoi Antoninianoι Europaioi*," and eventually Zoilos, a civic councilor's name, was inscribed on two of the *bouleuterion's* seats. *TEAD* 3, 31, no. 149; Downey (1988) 89–91. *TEAD* 8, no. 876 constitutes a Roman-era honorific inscription.

⁶³ *P. Dura* 17. Pollard (2007) 100 stresses that increased "Semitic" names among citizens could relate to changed perceptions of self and community, but transformations in citizenship patterns probably contributed too. Yon (2004) 324 notes that new citizens could be veterans or locals.

⁶⁴ *P. Dura* 27.

Similarly, a third-century Greek inscription commemorated three *bouleutai* and priests of Artemis whose families are previously unattested in the civic record. They all had assumed the name Aurelius as Roman citizens, and they were otherwise named Goras, Orthonobazos, and Zebidadados.⁶⁵ This Greek civic *boulē* was now an ethnically and culturally heterogeneous institution whose Syrian members had earned Greek citizenship during the period of Roman occupation. The inclusive nature of Dura's Greek civic order is further suggested by a third-century document listing the *phylē Zebeina*, perhaps a civic "tribe" if not a traditional kinship-oriented one. This document listed twenty-six people whose names suggest Syrian, Persian, or "Arab" ethnic origin.⁶⁶ All told, the evidence described above indicates that ethnic Syrians, some perhaps Aramaic-speaking, were contributing to the quotidian routines of Greek civic life even if Greek language carried overt prestige and was primarily used in inscriptions and civic documents.

Also, under Roman rule, Dura-Europos articulated in concrete ways its affiliation with the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*. In addition to fostering honorific epigraphic practices, the city underwent monumentalization consistent with that of other Greek cities in the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*, despite limitations imposed by the existing urban topography. The city's northern part had been garrisoned by Roman forces, and the crowded city's other sections, which also variously housed veterans, afforded limited possibility for urban renewal. Yet, along Dura-Europos' principal road, residents established a colonnaded thoroughfare even if inconsistent building exteriors prevented full alignment. An arch marked a transition in which the street quickly terminated in a steep decline toward the Euphrates.⁶⁷ Such evidence indicates that while existing topography restricted renovation, elites and citizens still endeavored to make the civic terrain accessible to the movements and gazes of a newly articulated Greek citizen body comprised of diverse ethnic elements in ways that cohered with Greek cities in the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*. This process, however, was unfinished. The Sasanians sacked the city in 256 CE, and it was abandoned thereafter.

Still, before the Sasanian occupation, the ethnic Syrians, Persians, or "Arabs" who had earned Greek citizenship in Dura-Europos enacted Greek

⁶⁵ SEG 2.824; Cumont (1926) no. 50. These men called themselves "colonists," and their names are Aramaic or Persian.

⁶⁶ *P. Dura* 47. In certain cases, this could result from Greco-Macedonian families giving Near Eastern names to children. In *P. Dura* 31, Nabousamaos and Akkozis, two villagers from Ossa, have fathers named Konon and Seleukos. Abissaios was their grandfather.

⁶⁷ Leriche (2004) 151, 154–58. The agora features similar colonnaded elements. Coqueugniot (2011) 305–7. Baird (2012) 41–43: veterans and their impact.

civic performance. In the early third century CE, a certain Orthonobazos, son of Goras donated a cornice, replete with Dionysiac reliefs, to the sanctuary of Artemis. Orthonobazos and Goras also appear in an inscription at the sanctuary of Artemis as *bouleutai*, “colonists,” and “priests of Artemis.”⁶⁸ Being a councilman in a Greek *polis* and a Roman *colonia*, Orthonobazos acted in the context of cooperation and competition produced by the civic council’s hegemonic forces. While Roman patronage facilitated the survival and prosperity of the Greek civic community at Dura-Europos, civic Greeks like Orthonobazos impacted their city through euergetic deeds. But Roman magistrates also received honors. In the 230s CE, a local Greek notable, Antigonos, son of Marion, an *archiereus*, dedicated a statue or altar to the consular magistrate and “euergete” Claudius Sollemnius Pacatianus near the arch at the principal thoroughfare.⁶⁹

The temple of Zeus Sôtēr (often called of Bel), which housed a cult to the Palmyrene gods under the Romans, likewise indicates how the incorporation of Syrians into Dura-Europos’ civic body affected the city’s culture amid the transition from Parthian to Roman rule. It is worth discussing the Parthian-era temple first. Civic Greeks apparently had erected this temple’s *naos* to Zeus along the city’s northwest wall in the early first century CE, or perhaps somewhat earlier, and after frequenting it for some time, they eventually added a *pronaos*.⁷⁰ According to an inscription of 115 CE, Lysias, son of Konon, son of Patroklos dedicated a room adjoining the temple’s central court.⁷¹ This Lysias was perhaps either the descendant or ancestor of the Konon, son of Nikostratos who commissioned a mural on the *naos*’ southern wall featuring him with his sons Lysias and Patroklos, Patroklos’ son Konon, other relatives, and priests.

Two men named “Konon, son of Nikostratos” who appear in the documents of Dura-Europos could plausibly be the Konon whose painting decorated the *naos*’ southern wall. One flourished in the first century CE, the other in the second. A certain Konon, son of Nikostratos, along with family members, left inscriptions on seats of the temple of Atargatis’ *pronaos* c. 61 CE.⁷² A century later, another Konon, son of Nikostratos appears as

⁶⁸ Cumont (1926) 226–40, with nos. 50; 121. ⁶⁹ TEAD 4, no. 169; Leriche (2004) 156.

⁷⁰ Downey (1988) 105. Dirven (1999) 293–95 stresses that the temple was not dedicated to Bel or “the Palmyrene gods” during the Parthian period. In 51 CE, a certain Xenokrates, son of Seleukos, son of Ammonios left a dedication to “Zeus Sôtēr” for Seleukos, son of Lysias, son of Seleukos, the city’s *strategos* and *epistatēs*. TEAD 2, H4.

⁷¹ Cumont (1926) no. 1.

⁷² Cumont (1926) nos. 109–11. The relatives’ inscriptions have dates. Heyn (2011) 223–25 discusses evidence. If the Lysias, son of Konon, son of Patroklos who dedicated the inscription of 115 described above (Cumont (1926) no. 1) was descended from the Konon, son of Patroklos depicted in Konon’s

a *Europaïos* in documents from 159–160 and c.180. The later of the two is the earliest surviving legal transaction in which men solely with attested Aramaic or Persian names appear as *Europaïoi*.⁷³ Also, in the *pronaos* of the temple of Zeus Sôtēr, the western portion of the north wall bears a series of paintings divided into two horizontal registers. The upper register's western painting bears graffiti with dates of 158 and 165–66 (its *terminus ante quem*), and “Konon, son of Nikostratos” was inscribed twice into the westernmost painting below it.⁷⁴

The evidence is perhaps inconclusive, but it shows that a man named Konon, son of Nikostratos commissioned the painting in the *naos* of the temple of Zeus Sôtēr either before or during the mid-second century. Almost certainly preceding the Roman occupation, the fresco reflects the social positioning of a Parthian-era *Europaïos* whose civic community generally excluded Near Eastern ethnics. Konon's mural depicted two priests performing a sacrifice to one of the temple's gods, and it showed them in the conical hat and white robe typical of Syrian priests.⁷⁵ A painted image of Konon stood to the priests' left; he wore a tunic, a cloak, and a headgear reflecting a Near Eastern paradigm (Figure 22). Konon's family was painted to the right of the priests. Identified by inscriptions, their images stood with upraised hands, a gesture of adoration.⁷⁶

Konon significantly worshipped at a temple administered by Greek *Europaïoi* but in which the priests dressed in Near Eastern hieratic fashions. He apparently assumed certain Near Eastern styles of dress as he worshipped. His mural therefore shows how Greek civic and ethnic affiliation in the Parthian-era settlement could intersect with the cultivation of Near Eastern idioms and practices. In fact, the likeness of Zeus in the *naos*, presumably made shortly after the temple's construction, has been almost entirely obliterated, but a portion revealed during excavation shows that he wore Parthian-style trousers.⁷⁷ Within the symbolic framework in which *Europaïoi* operated, Konon could recast Near Eastern cultural forms as components of Greek ethnic and civic performance even as his citizen community generally did not integrate Near Eastern ethnics.

mural, he would be the great-grandson of the same Konon, son of Nikostratos who commissioned it.

⁷³ *P. Dura* 24 (159/60 CE); *P. Dura* 17, which shares witnesses with *P. Dura* 25 (180 CE).

⁷⁴ Cumont (1926) nos. 24, 29; Rostovtzeff (1935) 245–46: the graffiti.

⁷⁵ Butcher (2003) 331 notes that the priests' dress resembles that of the priest of Hadad on Manbog's coinage (fourth century BCE).

⁷⁶ Cumont (1926) 41–56, Pl. 31–42 (31 for entire family), no. 5; Perkins (1973) 38–39, Pl. 10; Heyn (2011) Fig. 13.3. Note that some photos have been retintured, including Figure 22 of this text, which shows Konon with priests (family omitted).

⁷⁷ Perkins (1973) 37.



Figure 22. Close-up of fresco of Konon, Konon with Priests (retinctured).

The fresco depicting Iabsymsos, son of Abdaathes reflects the opposite. A certain Otes, who also appears in the fresco, commissioned it in one of the sanctuary's chapels. It showed the two men performing an incense sacrifice, and the man on the left was inscribed "Iabsymsos, son of Abdaathes, *bouleutēs*."⁷⁸ Iabsymsos' status as a civic councilor dates the inscription to the period in which Dura-Europos was incorporated into the Roman empire and the *Europaioi* extended Greek citizenship to ethnic Syrians and Persians. Iabsymsos' family is otherwise unattested, but his name and that of his father suggest that Iabsymsos was from a Syrian or Near Eastern ethnic family whose members had only recently earned citizen status. He had nonetheless become a *bouleutēs*, and in the fresco his friend Otes depicted him as wearing a Greek *himation* and priestly fillet.⁷⁹ During Iabsymsos' lifetime, Palmyrene divinities had been introduced to the temple of Zeus because of the influx of Palmyrene archers in the Roman garrison, and if Otes' fresco is accurate, Iabsymsos participated in their veneration. To his right stood five Palmyrene gods. The middle divinity, Zeus-Bel, wore Parthian-style trousers, and several other gods were dressed in Roman military garb. Although they were culturally eclectic in their artistic production, Iabsymsos, the civic councilor of a Greek collective, was depicted venerating them.

The murals of Konon and Iabsymsos represent an innovative restructuring of two broad artistic trends that typified frontier cities such as Dura-Europos, Palmyra, and Edessa. While such cities developed artistic styles of wall-painting or mosaic production influenced by the artistic media of Antioch, whose mosaics consisted largely of multi-colored *emblemata* (small stones) with Greek mythological themes, the figural representations of Dura-Europos were also affected by artistic styles, ones found widely in Parthian-era Mesopotamia, that emphasized frontality, two-dimensionality, and hierarchized familial representation.⁸⁰ Yet, the production of such art did not constitute a crude or static adoption of diverse cultural forms, but it reflects the exploitation of regional artistic trends by inhabitants of Dura-Europos in ways that enabled them to express civic Greekness within a constantly transforming symbolic field. Although the Greek citizens

⁷⁸ Cumont (1926) 125–28, Pl. 55–58, no. 9.

⁷⁹ The Lysias, son of Bargates, whose image was in the temple of Zeus Sōtēr (*pronaos*, south wall), was perhaps the "Barlaas, also called [Ly]sias, son of Bargates" that an inscribed dedication (178 CE) describes as *gazophylax*. If he was a municipal "treasurer," it would suggest his acquisition of Greek citizenship. Cumont (1926) no. 6, Pl. 44–47; *TEAD* 7–8, no. 874.

⁸⁰ Sommer (2005a) 352–54; Butcher (2003) 316–18. Elsner (2001a) 299–304 treats art and cultural "resistance" at Dura-Europos.

Konon and Iabsymsos were represented in these paintings, Near Eastern artistic forms were the media through which it happened.

The example of Otes, the person with an apparently Persian name sacrificing on Iabsymsos' right, has similar implications. According to his adjoining inscription, Otes had paid for the construction of the chapel in which the mural had been painted. Like Iabsymsos, he also wore a tunic and a Greek *himation*. Otes' inscription, however, identified him as a eunuch. In the classical cities farther west, Greeks and Romans deemed eunuchs debauched practitioners of "eastern," "exotic," and above all, "foreign" cults and unfit for Greek civic-cultic life.⁸¹ Yet, in Dura-Europos, Otes depicted himself in a Roman-era temple that civic Greeks (and now Roman soldiers) maintained as implicated in the Greek social community amid his castration, his veneration of Palmyrene deities, and apparently Syrian or Persian ethnic origins.⁸² The mural images of Iabsymsos and Otes thereby elucidate the production of innovative forms of Greekness and alternative social identifications that characterized life in Roman-era Dura-Europos. They also illustrate how local agents could recast Greekness by implementing strategies of negotiation that constituted neither full accommodation nor outright resistance. Within the discursive and performative framework that the city's Greek citizens and civic councilors had crafted, new articulations of Greekness, Romanness, and Syrian or Near Eastern affiliations were constantly being generated in ways that flouted previous paradigms. Such were the transforming and eclectic civic performances of Dura-Europos.

Conclusion

Much had changed at Dura-Europos in the one hundred or so years that lapsed after Alexander Ammaios made his dedication. Alexander's double name befitted a settlement in which ethnic Greeks and Near Eastern ethnics populated distinct cognitive communities. Little about Alexander Ammaios may otherwise be known, but he perhaps shifted among diverse social universes. Being a Greek *Europaïos*, he also could have maintained meaningful ethnic or social bonds to Syrian (Aramean) residents of the Parthian imperial settlement. But the Dura-Europos that he inhabited was significantly different from that of Iabsymsos, son of Abdaathes. While

⁸¹ In Lucian, *Eun.* 6, the philosopher Diocles claims that the eunuch Bagoas should not enter temples, use bowls for libation, and frequent places of public assembly.

⁸² Cumont (1926) 125–26, no. 9. Behind Otes stands an acolyte labeled "Gorsak."

apparently being of Near Eastern ethnic origin, Iabsymsos was a civic councilor of the Roman-era Greek community, and his friend commissioned a Greek inscription celebrating this precise status. But the inscription also communicated his Aramaic names and friendship with a eunuch. If Iabsymsos had a more classical Greek name, it did not appear. Since Aramaic names were becoming increasingly characteristic of Greek citizens in the settlement, it merited no mention. The Greek civic order, which reconstituted “Greek” and “Syrian” as intersecting categories, had domesticated Aramaic names such as his.

While inscriptions appear in many languages at Dura-Europos, it is clear that Greek had the most currency as a language of overt prestige. This trend coheres with those of Greek communities under the Seleucids, Parthians, and Romans alike. But it must be noted how “un-classical” Greek practices at Dura-Europos could be, how *Europaioi* could reconstitute Near Eastern trends as components of Greek performance. Greek and Near Eastern idioms did not always so much mark distinctions between Greek and “other” as differences of social status. At Dura-Europos, Greeks frequented temples and houses organized in Mesopotamian patterns and worshipped divinities whose artistic forms deviated from classical Greek standards. Some perhaps spoke Aramaic amid routine civic practices. The Greeks of Dura-Europos thereby indicate how Greekness could be reconstituted in ways that integrated Near Eastern idioms. Treatments of hybridity, creolization, and the Middle Ground often describe processes of cultural interweaving and recreation, but they frequently do not map such shifts in discrete categorization. Roman imperial-era Greeks at Dura-Europos had discrepant experiences of Greekness and Syrianness, ones that interwove idioms of heterogeneous origins.

Roman imperial intervention prompted the extension of Greek citizenship in Dura-Europos to members of diverse ethnic affiliations. Because of this, Roman imperialism stimulated new types of people to become insiders of Greek civic orders in ways that transformed the types of Greekness that could be performed. Dura-Europos produced expressions of civic Greekness that deviated significantly from classical standards, and it accordingly stands alongside Antioch, Apamea, Gerasa, and Palmyra in representing the differing types of Greekness that the Roman imperial context of Syria spawned. With such an emphasis, Part II makes its transition to Part III. While Parts I and II stress how Syrians could create both Greek and “barbarian” cultural expressions that deviated from classical expectations, Part III maintains that Syrians expressed a consciousness that classical Greekness was an artifice that could be de-constructed or displaced by alternative

forms. The works of Lucian and other Syrian authors that critically engaged the “Second Sophistic” broach this subject and foreshadow the Palmyrene insurgency of the third century CE. This insurgency created a Greco-Roman empire embedded in a complex interweaving of Roman, Greek, and Near Eastern idioms.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Greeks write Syria *Performance and the signification of Greekness*

This study's previous chapters have explored the production of alternative or "un-classical" forms of Greekness within Roman Syria, and they have examined the forked implications of Syrians' unique cultural performances. While facilitating imperial cohesion and the hegemony of civic councils, these performances also empowered Syrians to express local distinctiveness and maintain a critical engagement with Roman imperial processes. The Palmyrene insurgency of the mid-late third century CE constituted the flowering of this critical engagement and these socio-cultural innovations, but the Palmyrenes' eventual political resistance to the central Roman administration also had an intellectual basis illuminated by Greek-writing authors who defined or positioned themselves in some way as Syrians. Chapter 9 explores this intellectual basis and how the eclectic corpus of Lucian, who frequently staged Syrian narrators and characters, expressed it. But first this chapter frames the socio-cultural context that Lucian, Syrian Christian writers, and Palmyrene insurgents confronted.

Romans and Greeks were not unwaveringly hostile to eastern provincials. As recent scholarship has stressed, Greeks, Romans, and "others" in various ways perceived common ground and maintained meaningful connections. Greek and Roman works could endow "barbarians" with positive traits.¹ Moreover, the Roman administration notably implemented rituals of imperial unity and extended Roman citizenship to provincials over time, with provincials often assimilating and becoming members of Italy's landowning aristocracy, imperial administrators, senators, and even emperors.² This trend had its parallel among Roman imperial-era Greeks. Provincials who cultivated Greek culture and especially classical *paideia* could become insiders to a wide but relatively exclusive network of "cultured" Greeks. In this

¹ Gruen (1998), (2002), (2006), (2011b) emphasizes the affinity and exchanges that could characterize relations among Greeks, Romans, Jews, and other populations.

² Ando (2000); Dench (2005) provide important treatment. Alföldy (1977) 318–22; Leunissen (1989) 46–48, 366–70 document administrators of Near Eastern origin.

sense, the Roman empire was a system in which provincials could become Greek and Roman insiders regardless of genealogy.

Yet, as the introduction and chapter 2 note, the receptivity of Greeks and Romans toward assimilated Syrians also had pernicious, paradoxical corollaries. While Roman governors took credit for patronizing Greek civic cultures in the Near East, Greeks and Italians of the Roman empire simultaneously mapped it as an inherently barbarian space and endowed its societies with exotic and oftentimes depraved traits. In this sense, Roman imperial processes shaped what was in theory knowable about the Near East, but they also empowered Greeks and Romans to accumulate “knowledge” of provincial peoples through which they staked pre-eminent socio-political and cultural positions. Their standard imperial narrative defined all inhabitants of the Near East as members of immutably “barbarian” ethnicities, regardless of their assimilation or ethnic self-definitions.³ While subsuming Greeks of the Near East within such “barbarian” societies, their discourse mapped classical Greece and Italy in both ethnic and cultural terms as centers of the empire’s authentic Greekness and Romanness in ways that de-legitimized alternative expressions. But this was not all. The widespread belief that provincial societies had certain innate, essential characteristics facilitated arguments that even provincials who assimilated to Greek or Italian norms could be exposed as counterfeit, as disguising their truly deviant natures. In such ways, Greeks and Romans who inhabited the higher rungs of the socio-political hierarchy consolidated their exclusive cultural legitimacy and even distanced themselves from provincials who had cultivated their same attributes. This study has previously noted how Cicero, Tacitus, Hadrian, and Herodian contributed to such discourses. It now examines how notable Greek sophists, namely Aristides, Philostratus, and Dio of Prusa, did so.

As described previously, the views of Roman imperial figures, such as the emperor Hadrian, concerning what constituted legitimate Greekness often cohered with those espoused by the intellectuals of the “Second Sophistic.”⁴ Despite points of internal debate, the tendency for Roman authorities and Greek sophists to situate legitimate Hellenism in their

³ Richter (2011) 92, 111, 116–34 (on Aristides) treats how Roman imperial Greeks could employ ethnic and cultural categorizations.

⁴ This period and its Greek intellectual trends are frequently called the “Second Sophistic” by modern scholars. Philostratus used it to describe professional speakers engaging in epideictic oratory between the fourth century BCE and third century CE, but scholars now employ it to describe how Roman-era Greeks reconnected to the classical past. Anderson (1993) 13. Some relevant works are Swain (1996), Schmitz (1997) Goldhill (2001a), Alcock *et al.* (2001), Lightfoot (2003), Borg (2004), Elsner and Rutherford (2005), Konstan and Saïd (2006), König (2009).

engagement with “classical” practices stimulated them to devalue alternative forms of cultural expression. As a result, the intellectual alliance between Roman imperial authorities and mainstream Greek academics implicated sophists and philosophers in an imperialist vision that classified the city of Rome and classical Greek lands as cultural centers and relegated the provinces of the interior Near East to exotic uncultured landscapes. Accordingly, whereas scholars have often stressed how Greek sophists navigated the Roman empire’s power structure as imperial subjects, this chapter and chapter 9 pursue a different angle. They stress how Greek sophists and local notables of classical lands contributed to imperial “knowledge” that procured the abjection of “un-classical” provincials, and they argue that certain works of Lucian can be deemed critiques of this phenomenon. Although lack of space prevents detailed examination of the Christian authors Tatian and Justin Martyr, these chapters at various points gloss how these authors, like their contemporary Lucian, critiqued Roman imperial ideologies and their stabilization of Greek sophistic culture. But first some preliminary discussion of the “Second Sophistic” is in order.

The rule of sophists

While by no means part of a unitary, uniform, or totalizing “movement,”⁵ the sophistic culture of the period can be summarized as follows. From the mid-first to the mid-third century CE, erudite Greek elites increasingly located Greek self-definition in a mastery of “pure” Greek language and the replication of what typically constituted an idealized narrative of Greece’s classical past. In such a context, Greek *paideia* was “the locus of a series of competitions concerning the proper way in which life should be lived.”⁶ While the Antonine emperors and Roman authorities patronized Greek sophists of this era, who harvested influence and prestige within and among the eastern empire’s Greek city-states, the Greek *paideia* and other cultural trademarks that sophists cultivated were not entirely uniform. Instead, authors of this period fashioned various positions on the legitimacy of Roman authority, Greek intellectual trends, and local practices. Despite this agonistic feature, sophists, educated Greeks, and Roman philhellenes had general points of accord. One of them was the supremacy of the Attic dialect. Another was that an emulation of classical Greek authors and figures and an interaction with classical Greek monuments constituted the most legitimate contemporary expression of Greekness.

⁵ Whitmarsh (2011) 9–10.

⁶ Whitmarsh (2001b) 273, 305; (2001a) 5 (quoted).

During the second century CE, sophists and intellectuals employed a “linguistic continuum” of Greek that could include *koinē* and varied classical dialects (including Ionic), but sophists, Greek elites, and Roman philhellenes tended to vaunt the purity and pre-eminence of the Attic dialect even if debates raged about proper Attic lexicography and practical implementation, or regarding what Atticism actually was.⁷ Their visions constituted a “linguistic ideology,” the endowment of certain linguistic forms with moral and social implications.⁸ Their linguistic ideology maintained that the mastery of classical Attic Greek language defined a morally sound, educated, and elite Greek. While such an inert “standardized” Atticism was accessible to educated elites throughout the Mediterranean who could use it to create an “intelligentsia” of sorts, its inaccessibility to the majority of middling or poor Greek-speakers, who could probably understand but not speak it, excluded them from the league of “real Greeks” as defined by sophists.⁹ It was therefore considered a great compliment to be “filled with Attic grace,” and Athenians were known to be “siblings of philosophy” and practitioners of contemplative poverty.¹⁰ Yet, such rigorous standards could render even Athenians as not sufficiently Greek or Attic, especially as Athens allegedly became so awash in youths from “Thrace, Pontus, and other barbarian *ethnē*” that Attic speech patterns were tainted.¹¹ According to one source, an uneducated Athenian, who spoke Greek improperly, once bragged that the emperor had granted him Roman citizenship. The philosopher Demonax responded that the emperor should have made him Greek instead of Roman.¹²

Likewise, through their imitation (*mimēsis*) of classical Greek authors, sophists presented themselves as exemplary Greeks within a Roman imperial context. As part of this imitative process, they positioned themselves as insiders to Greek classical traditions and harvested their prestige even as they increasingly accepted Roman citizenship and negotiated the imperial system’s complex demands.¹³ Even if sophists did not exercise political power, their *mimēsis* of classical traditions, when successful, made them into charismatic figures who exerted tremendous influence, even over Roman

⁷ Swain (1996) 18–21 (“linguistic continuum”); Anderson (1993) 86–100. Goldhill (2002) 89–93; Whitmarsh (2005a) 41–47: debates about Atticism. Whitmarsh (2005a) 47–49: rejection of Atticism. Kim (2010a) presents survey.

⁸ Kroskrity (2000a) 8; Irvine and Gal (2000) 35–39; Irvine (2001) generally.

⁹ Kim (2010a) 469–272; Richter (2011) 137–38, 142–45 discuss *diglossia* and Attic among pan-Mediterranean Greek elites.

¹⁰ Lucian, *Nigr.* 12–13. ¹¹ Philostr., *VS* 553–54. ¹² Lucian, *Demon.* 40.

¹³ Preston (2001) 188–89 treats Plutarch as “both an insider and an outsider to Roman culture” or “more of an insider to Greek culture than to Roman.” Herodes Atticus’ mastery of *paideia* certainly facilitated his interactions with Roman imperial agents. Tobin (1997) generally.

imperial authorities. This *mimēsis* was not rote imitation; it also consisted of imaginative forms of innovation and experiments with Greek literary genres and could encapsulate “agonistic self-positioning” against Greek classical traditions.¹⁴ Yet, despite the wide spectrum of forms that creative *mimēsis* could assume and its ability to alter what defined Greek tradition for contemporary audiences, it was consistently embedded in an engagement with a relatively stable canon of classical literature, the topography of the classical Greek world, and the revival of the Attic dialect. Ethnicity too could factor into the complicated game of legitimate Greekness. The regions of the interior Near East, and the forms of Greekness that they had produced, were thereby excluded from this realm of *mimēsis*, in part because sophists did not recognize their inhabitants as ethnically Greek. As Roman power-holders, civic elites of classical Greek cities, and sophists located true Greekness in classical lands and expended considerable resources on their monumental development, this imperial process stimulated a set of mutually reinforcing material conditions and ideologies that elevated classical Greek cities and Rome above those conquered or established by Alexander’s successors.¹⁵

Accordingly, it is important for present purposes to stress the performative features on which the culture of the “Second Sophistic” relied. Sophists earned much of their charismatic authority by role-playing as the embodiments of classical Greeks long dead. They played this role by excavating the Attic dialect, but this was not all. An acute fixation on proper modes of viewing classical or classicizing art and architecture and reading classical texts, which overlapped in the form of literary *ekphrasis*, also marked the “cultured” (*pepaideumenoi*), and a skilled author such as Lucian could exploit this to manipulate his audience’s insecurities.¹⁶ Athletics, musical performances, gymnastic pursuits, and the production of material culture that engaged classical precedents were yet another means for the creative emulation of the past.¹⁷ Perhaps most important, sophists and philosophers

¹⁴ Whitmarsh (2001a) 88–89; (2001b) 304–5 (quoted); (2005a) 54–56. Previously, Bompai (1958) 71–77.

¹⁵ Bowie (2004) 76–79 catalogues references to the locations of sophists, their monuments, and their place of origin. Attestations for mainland Greece, Ionia, and Rome dominate.

¹⁶ Elsner (1995) 24–28; Goldhill (2001b), especially 156–67, 184–93. More recently Bartsch and Elsner (2007); Webb (2009). In general, issues of taste, lifestyle, and aesthetic cultivation produce and maintain differentiation among constituted social segments, whether seen or unseen by external audiences. Bourdieu (1984) 466–84; (1985) 205. Goldhill (2002) 93 (on *False Critic* and *Lexiphanes*), “Your role as an educated reader is what’s on the line here . . . Are you sure you are reading properly, right now?”

¹⁷ Van Nijf (2001) for athletics, music, and gymnastic activity; many articles of Borg (2004) focus on material culture.

endeavored to assume the visages of seminal Greeks by staging themselves as famous Greek philosophers and politicians in their displays of declamation, by presenting public speeches that engaged intensively with classical examples, by frequenting notable classical Greek sites, or, in their everyday behavior, by growing long beards, wearing *himatia*, brandishing staves, and maintaining rigorously masculine physical deportments.¹⁸ The Gallic eunuch Favorinus is an exception that illuminates the norm. Even on the most quotidian of levels, sophists implemented a “stylized repetition of acts” through which they produced and mapped normative Greek behavior and established divisions between male and female, mass and elite, and Greek and barbarian.¹⁹ Casting themselves as legitimate Greek men, they reduced the barbarian and feminine, which they sometimes conflated, to a state of abjection in ways that illustrated their pre-eminent positions in the social order.²⁰ As part of this process, they unwaveringly mapped the Near East as a “barbarian” terrain despite its widespread acculturation to Greek norms.

Mapping Greekness

The prestige of sophistic culture in the Roman empire, as described above, shaped imperial narratives that rendered the Near East an unwaveringly barbarian place. The intensive engagement with classical Hellenism that characterized the Roman empire’s sophists affected how they mapped legitimate Greekness in spatial, topographic, and thereby putatively ethnic terms. As previous chapters have stressed, imperial figures such as Cicero and Hadrian, and Greek-writing authors like Posidonius of Apamea and Philo of Alexandria framed the interior Near East as a barbarian region, one quite distinctive from classical lands where “real” Greeks lived. Even before Hadrian had established his Panhellenic league, the Julio-Claudians had founded an earlier version constrained to the Greek mainland.²¹ It was in this vein that the emperor Nero toured Greece in 67 and competed in its Panhellenic games. While praising its inhabitants and elevating

¹⁸ In declamation, an orator would “become” Demosthenes or Plato in ways that both enacted and recreated the past for an audience. Schmitz (1999) 71–76; Whitmarsh (2005a) 20–21; Webb (2006a) 39–42 (who nuances Schmitz’s position).

¹⁹ Butler (1997) 51 describes performative iterability and citationality as a form of acts that successfully “echoes prior actions, and accumulates the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior and authoritative set of practices.” Butler (1987) 179–80; (1993) 1–3. Schmitz (1999) 76–80; Gunderson (2000) 112–15 discuss the relevance of performativity to rhetorical performance.

²⁰ Gleason (1995) 55–80 (on physiognomy and sophists); Whitmarsh (2005a) 22–40.

²¹ Oliver (1989) 69–79: inscription and commentary.

them above other Greeks, he proclaimed its freedom (*eleutheria*) at Corinth.²² He never visited Syria.

In other words, even in its early stages, Roman imperial narratives had situated classical Greece at the center of legitimate Greekness and had relegated the Near East to its margins, or even beyond them. Such an understanding of where legitimate Greekness was located, one predicated upon a combination of putatively ethnic and cultural criteria, accorded with that of many Greek sophists and Roman philhellenes active between 50 CE and 250 CE. Even if many Syrians were descended from Greeks or cultivated Greek cultural characteristics, Greek sophists and others of their ilk, who assumed their Near Eastern descent, tended to frame them as ethnically barbarian, culturally barbarian, or both. Conventional wisdom stressed that “even a barbarian” could distinguish a classical Greek city such as Rhodes from “a city of Syria or Cilicia.”²³ In a panegyric to Athens, Aelius Aristides argues that Attica of all Greek territories was most “foreign” to barbarians. While Greece was at the center of the earth, Attica was Greece’s center, and Athens was Attica’s.²⁴ Likewise, although Aristides’ panegyric to Rome praises the Roman emperors for not distinguishing between Greeks and barbarians and for educating the barbarians in Greek customs, he posits that these barbarians frequently lived in Syrian lands.²⁵ He therefore notes that Roman security ensured that neither Greeks nor barbarians were afraid to cross between the Cilician gates or the narrow passage through Arabia to Egypt. His statement hints at a conceptual geography that mapped the gates of Cilicia and the narrow stretch of Arabia east of Egypt as transitional zones between legitimately Greek and barbarian worlds.²⁶ In his hymn to the Aegean Sea, he claims that this sea was the center of Hellenism because it was flanked on its east by the Aeolians and the Ionians and on its west by Greece.²⁷ Furthermore, when Aristides praises Rome and the regions in which it had enabled Greek cities to flourish, he mentions the cities of Ionia and Alexandria of Egypt, but none from Syria.²⁸

Several generations later, the notable sophist Philostratus and his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* operated with similar assumptions about the ethnically barbarian and uncultivated interior Near East. While Philostratus’

²² Suet., *VN* 20–24, 56; *Syll.*³ 814; Philostr., *VA* 5.41. ²³ Dio Chrys., 31.163.

²⁴ Aristid., *Or.* 1.15–16. Israelowich (2007) discusses how Aristides maps cultural Greekness.

²⁵ Aristid., *Or.* 26.63, 96.

²⁶ Aristid., *Or.* 26.100. But Aristides envisages that Greek culture could spread to these places. Israelowich (2007).

²⁷ Aristid., *Or.* 44.4. ²⁸ Aristid., *Or.* 26.94–6.

narrative treats most Greek cities as having departed from their ancestors' proper classical customs, it renders the interior Near East as particularly transgressive.²⁹ Apollonius, the work's hero, was from the "Greek city" of Tyana of Cappadocia. Although from an uncultivated region, the future philosopher and mystic spoke with an "Attic" tongue unaffected by the Cappadocians' harsh accent.³⁰ His pure Atticism contrasted starkly with the interior Near East's dominant linguistic trends. He initially studied at Tarsus, which Philostratus describes as a crude and luxurious city. He then wandered through Cilicia and eventually arrived at Antioch. He visited the sanctuary of Apollo at Daphne, where "Assyrians" claimed that Daphne, the daughter of Ladon, had been transformed into a laurel tree and had therefore named the local river the Ladon. There, he found the inhabitants of Daphne so "semi-barbarous" (*hēmibarbaroi*) and uncultured (*amousoi*) that he rebuked the river for having transformed from an Arcadian Greek to a barbarian.³¹ Later in the work, Philostratus claims that Antioch had no "interest in Greek culture."³² In Philostratus' view, residents of the Near East cultivated forms of illegitimate Greek culture that deviated from classical Attic ideals. Apollonius, the Atticizing luminary, was truly exceptional.³³

Subsequently, Philostratus' Apollonius journeyed east to search for arcane forms of knowledge and philosophy. He went to "Old Ninos," apparently a name for Hierapolis-Manbog, where he visited the temple of Atargatis and its "barbarian" image that resembled Io because it possessed horns. There he befriended an "Assyrian" named Damis who spoke poor Greek because he had been educated among "barbarians."³⁴ Damis, however, was conversant in many of the Near East's dialects, and he wrote Greek competently enough to record his Atticizing patron's deeds. In fact, Damis would eventually claim that he was able to "associate with Greeks, having been made a Greek by him [Apollonius]."³⁵ The character Damis, in Philostratus' estimation, was a barbarian who became Greek and cultivated Greek *paideia* through Apollonius' tutelage. Apollonius had embodied true Greekness from birth; Damis learned it by interacting with him. Still, their qualities distinguished them from most Syrians and Greeks of Syria.

²⁹ Even Athens deviated from proper ancestral tradition. Philostr., *VA* 4.21.

³⁰ Philostr., *VA* 1.4, 7. ³¹ Philostr., *VA* 1.16.2. ³² Philostr., *VA* 3.58.

³³ In Philostratus' narrative, non-Greeks could "become Greek" by cultivating Greek *paideia*, but the text denies the "validity" of Greek identity for those not satisfying certain "cultural or moral norms." Flinterman (1995) 92–93.

³⁴ Philostr., *VA* 1.19.1–2. Jones (2005) 1.13–17; 38–39, 74–77.

³⁵ Philostr., *VA* 3.43: Ἑλλῆσι τε ἐπιμίξειν Ἑλλῆν ὑπ' αὐτοῦ γεγόμενος.

After meeting at Hierapolis, the two men crossed the Euphrates. Near Babylon, a dream revealed to Apollonius the existence of the community of Eretrian Greeks who had been deported to the region of Kissia after the Persians invaded Greece in 490 BCE. They still worshipped Greek gods, spoke Greek, and used Greek script.³⁶ This episode is striking because Philostratus never mentions any Greek city founded in Mesopotamia or eastward by Alexander and his successors. He depicts Parthia as bereft of Greeks except for a settlement that classical Greeks had formed. Apollonius therefore did not encounter another Greek-speaking community until he reached India, where the Brahmin worshipped Greek gods.³⁷ Philostratus explicitly states that the philhellenizing Indians whom Apollonius encountered dwelled beyond the Hyphasis river, where Alexander had dedicated altars and local inhabitants had left an inscription indicating his conquests' farthest limits.³⁸ By locating pure Greek culture beyond the margins of Alexander's empire, Philostratus indicates that it had not been brought to the Near East by Greco-Macedonians but instead enjoyed a timeless mystical quality in the depths of India. In fact, many sophists believed that the Brahmin or "gymnosophists" exemplified forms of "Greek" erudition, philosophy, and mystical knowledge worthy of respect and imitation.³⁹ Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists* presents a similar picture. The Near East's inhabitants could become Greeks by studying at Greek centers in classical lands, but their home regions were at the peripheries of legitimate Greekness.⁴⁰

Staging the Greek and the barbarian: Dio and the Tarsians

As just described, Romans and Greeks generally framed the inhabitants of Syria and its surrounding territories as ethnically barbarian and as located on the periphery of legitimate Greekness. This was not all. Romans and Greeks of the late Hellenistic and Roman imperial periods ascribed to such "barbarians" the characters of depraved, servile, and androgynous

³⁶ Philostr., *VA* 1.24, who apparently engages Hdt., 6.119. Reger (2009) 251–2 examines the "classical" Greek networking of Philostratus' Mesopotamia.

³⁷ Philostr., *VA* 3.12–14.

³⁸ Philostr., *VA* 2.43. Reger (2009); Richter (2011) 198–206: Greeks in Philostratus' India.

³⁹ Lucian, *Peregr.* 25–6 describes how the charlatan Peregrinus immolates himself on a funeral pyre like the Brahmin.

⁴⁰ Philostr., *VS* 585–7 discusses how the Phoenician Hadrian taught rhetoric at Athens. The "Assyrian" sophist Isaeus had a similar career, but Philostratus does not provide explicit geographical details (513–14). Likewise, Ulpian, the *Syro-Attikos*, of Ath., 3.100 (126a–f). In Philostratus' account, Syrians, Phoenicians, and Arabs attend or teach at schools in classical lands.

easterners, even if they cultivated classical Greek culture. As the Roman administration solidified its control over the Near East, Romans and Greeks intensified their literary performances through which they concretized themselves as Greek or Roman subjects characterized by virtue and self-control. They did so by staging Greeks of the Near East as androgynous sexual deviants disguised as Greeks, and amid such rhetoric, they “exposed” such mimic Greeks for what they “really were”: barbarians defined by their flawed masculinity, weak ethnic claims, and incompleteness as Greeks or Romans.⁴¹

With his characteristic humor and creative *mimēsis* of classical Greek literature, the sophist Dio of Prusa, a native of Bithynia, provides one rhetorical performance that putatively exposed eastern “frauds.” This performance is his *First Tarsian Oration*, whose date, mode of delivery, and subject of criticism are all controversial. In this speech, Dio acknowledges that Tarsus was the metropolis of Cilicia and therefore the region’s most important Greek city, but then he proceeds to demonstrate in a putatively humorous critique how the Tarsians’ Greekness was merely a thin veneer for their truly barbarian natures and incompleteness as Greek men.⁴² Despite the city’s Greek habits, the Tarsians had failed to achieve Greekness, as Dio claims, because they lacked *sōphrosynē* (moderation) and were prone to *tryphē* (luxury), a signature eastern trait.⁴³ While noting that the Macedonian *genos* had disappeared because it assumed the royal dispositions and culinary arts of the Persians and Medes whom it had conquered, he then demonstrates how the Tarsians had suffered a similar fate.⁴⁴ According to Dio, their lack of *sōphrosynē* was illustrated by their tendency to make a noise (*regkein*) whose nature continues to stir scholarly debate and which is only introduced mid-way through the speech. The noise constituted snorting, snoring, or perhaps even farting.⁴⁵ After describing this controversial noise, Dio posits that the Tarsians’ immoderation and harsh sounds showed that they had suffered the influence of Near Eastern degeneracy and proclivity for illicit sex.⁴⁶ The sound, he claims, was a sign (*sēmeion*) of shamelessness and wantonness (*aselgeia*).⁴⁷ The Tarsians were therefore “barbarians” who imitated Greeks, a perception that prompts Dio to ask them how a passerby would conceive of them: “Will he say that you are

⁴¹ Ap. Met. 8.24–29; Cass. Dio, 80 [79].11 (on Antoninus Elagabalus); Ver., Aen. 4.214–15; Cat. 63.1–11.

⁴² Dio Chry., 33.17.

⁴³ Dio Chry., 33.17, 28.

⁴⁴ Dio Chry., 33.28.

⁴⁵ Kokkinia (2007) advocates flatulence.

⁴⁶ Gangloff (2006) 278–82; Bost-Pouderon (2000), (2003), (2006) 2.143–79 analyzes the noise’s significance as an ethnic and ethical marker. Bost-Pouderon (2006) 2.143–79; Kokkinia (2007) 407–8 summarize previous scholarship.

⁴⁷ Dio Chry., 33.49–50.

colonists from Argos, as you claim to be, or from those Aradians? Greeks, or the most licentious Phoenicians?"⁴⁸

In such ways, Dio's speech locates Roman-era Tarsus, Cilicia's *metropolis* and most notable port, at the ambivalent threshold of the Greek and barbarian worlds. Although many contemporary cities of Phoenicia, including Aradus, cultivated Greek culture, Dio represents Tarsus as a pivotal site through which the Greek landscape of Asia Minor could suffer the influence of seafaring barbarian Phoenicians, whom Roman authorities by this period classified as a sub-group of the Syrian *ethnos* (Syro-Phoenician).⁴⁹ In fact, while inverting Plato's formulation of Ionian, Lydian, and Phrygian strains of music as signs of Asiatic softness, Dio claims that at Tarsus the sounds of Phoenician "music" were now overwhelming these superior harmonies that characterized the Greeks of contemporary Asia Minor and corrupting the characters of those who heard them.⁵⁰ Dio's formulation places his home region of Bithynia safely within the cultural landscape of a Greek Asia Minor and isolates Cilicia to the nebulous periphery where barbarian Phoenician seafarers assailed classical Greek traditions. Likewise, by describing the Tarsians' eccentric sound as a disease that shaped a barbarian disposition and a sign indicating its existence beneath the screen of Greek practices, Dio conveys to his putative audience of Tarsians that they needed to extirpate it if they wanted to maintain the dispositions of Asia Minor's moderate Greek men, not those of Phoenician posers.

While challenging the Tarsians' claim of a Greek ethnic lineage, Dio's statement also insinuates that the Tarsians were Greeks on the surface but easterners in terms of the internal characters that they in truth cultivated, and he "reveals" that they were virtually Phoenicians masquerading as Greeks through a rhetoric of exposure relying on physiognomic theory. Greeks and Romans understood physiognomy to be the method through which qualified observers could "discern" peoples' internal dispositions by evaluating their physical features and habits.⁵¹ Even if no witnesses ever had seen subjects engaging in deviant sex, physiognomists could still identify their sexually deviant characters, thereby transforming their ostensibly

⁴⁸ Dio Chry., 33.41: καὶ πότερον ὑμᾶς Ἀργείων ἀποίκους, ὡς λέγετε, φήσει τις ἢ μᾶλλον ἐκείνων Ἀραδίων; καὶ πότερον Ἑλλήνας ἢ Φοινίκων τοὺς ἀσελγεστάτους; The reference to "those Aradians" implies the geographical, moral, and ethical distance of Phoenicia from Greece.

⁴⁹ Dio includes his home city of Prusa and other cities of Bithynia and Asia Minor among "real" Greek cities, in contrast to cities of Syria and Cilicia. Dio Chry., 12.49; 32.40; 47.13. Mark 7:26; Lucian, *Deor. Conc.* 4: Syro-Phoenicia.

⁵⁰ Dio Chry., 33.42; Pl. *Rep.* 398a–399e, *Lach.* 188d.

⁵¹ Bost-Pouderon (2003) 156–74; Bost-Pouderon (2000), (2006) 2.143–79 treat Dio's debt to the physiognomic tradition. Gleason (1995) 55–80, on the sophist Polemon, examines the relevance of physiognomy to male gender performance.

upright conduct into “evidence” for their depravity’s concealment. Dio employs physiognomy to establish himself as a Greek subject “exposing” an eastern “other” who had made an illegitimate claim to Greekness. He therefore hints that although the Tarsians appeared to be Greek in nearly all respects, their noise exposed them to be depraved easterners who produced a deceptive screen of Greek culture in the same way that to sneeze in a feminine manner could expose the true character of a *kinaidos*, an immoderate recipient of anal or oral penetration, even if he appeared manly on the surface.⁵² As Dio suggests, the Tarsians and such sexual deviants were intimately connected through their lack of *sōphrosynē* and their willingness to suffer insolence (*hybris*). Furthermore, Dio claims that the noise was not merely a “sign” (*sēmeion*) or “symbol” of a sexually deviant *ēthos* but that it also constituted a “disease” (*nosēma*) that generated it.⁵³

Dio thereby suggests that “barbarians” could be “exposed” in the same way as sexual deviants, and even more. By referring to the Tarsians as Phoenicians and Aradians, he indicates that the Tarsians were in fact androgynous, sexually deviant ethnic barbarians posing as Greek men. His reproach relies on a standard literary trope, one widely embraced by Greek and Roman authors, that framed Syrian or Phoenician men as sexual deviants who exerted a flawed masculinity. Such sexual deviancy and signs of androgyny included castration, anal penetration, and the performance of oral sex. In fact, flatulence, if this was the target of Dio’s ridicule, was associated with receptivity for anal penetration.⁵⁴ Likewise, by this period Greeks were using the verb *phoinikizō* to describe the performance of oral sex on women, a type of sexual perversion that Phoenicians allegedly indulged.⁵⁵ It is therefore particularly damning that Dio suggests that the Tarsians had the internal characters of “Aradians, the most licentious of Phoenicians.” If the Arabic reception of the *Physiognomy* of Polemo, Dio’s student, provides an accurate indication, Greeks of this period especially deemed Aradians to be the exemplars of the Phoenicians’ proclivity for being *androgynoi* and performers of oral sex on women. In this work, Polemo claims to have encountered a man from Aradus who, despite having no penis, did unspeakable acts with women.⁵⁶ It is in this vein worth stressing that in *False Critic*, Lucian stages an anonymous Syrian narrator who mocks a

⁵² Dio Chry., 33.54. ⁵³ Dio Chry., 33.53–56, 62.

⁵⁴ Kokkinia (2007) 414–15: flatulence and anal penetration.

⁵⁵ Galen defines this verb in *de simplicium medicamentorum temperamentis ac facultatibus libri* 12, 249 (Kuhn’s edition).

⁵⁶ *The Leiden Polemon*, A 16; Hoyland’s translation, in Swain (2009b) 368–71. Swain (2009b) discusses the reception of Polemon’s *Physiognomy* and translations of receptor texts.

Syro-Phoenician rival for his barbarous speech, lack of *paideia*, and for “acting like a Phoenician” (*phoinikizein*).⁵⁷ While perhaps parodying the rhetoric of barbarian exposure that sophists like Dio vaunted, the Syrian narrator endows his adversary with regional traits that he too could easily be accused of possessing, for Phoenicians were by then members of the Syrian *ethnos* and were often categorized as Syrians (Syro-Phoenicians).⁵⁸ This rival, a Tyrian known for inveterately performing oral sex, had indulged a staple Phoenician and, more broadly, Syrian vice.

When Dio accuses the Tarsians of bearing the noise of Aradian Phoenicians, his statements have similar implications. He thereby claims that the Tarsians’ sound had the same connotations as the voice articulated by castrated men; both characterized “he-women” (*androgynoi*). At his speech’s end, Dio even remarks that many Tarsians were already practicing bodily and genital depilation, a sure sign of a *kinaidos*. By cutting their facial and genital hair, they were undergoing a sustained process of excision, and this process suggested that they only needed bellies and sexual organs to gratify their unrestrained desires. These sexual organs included those of women; if they had vaginas, they would be “complete” as “he-women” (*androgynoi*) instead of lacking, deficient males.⁵⁹

Despite its putatively humorous traits, Dio’s speech contains a barbed criticism of the Tarsians, and it certainly deprecated Phoenicians. As Dio surmises, Tarsus possessed an *agora*, a theater, and a gymnasium, but this gravelly sound “dominated” (*dynasteuei*) its civic performances, thereby contaminating these staple institutions of Greek civic life and exposing the Tarsians to be, like Phoenicians, depraved barbarians who had fallen short of the masculine ideal that Greek sophists embodied.⁶⁰ Because Dio “reveals” the Tarsians to have concealed the same perverse and presumably ethnically informed characters beneath moderate Greek exteriors, he stresses that the Tarsians were only eastern imitations, a distorted copy of a true Greek model. The Tarsians, like the Phoenicians that they resembled, were “imitation Greeks.”

The analogy that Dio draws between Tarsians and Phoenicians is laden with connotations of cultural ambiguity and deception that probably would have been obvious to his Greek readers. In fact, while Dio’s decision to associate the Tarsians with Phoenicians imbues them with an androgynous and sexually deviant quality, it also indexes the cultural indeterminacy

⁵⁷ Lucian, *Pseudol.* 28. ⁵⁸ Mark 7:26; Lucian, *Deor. Conc.* 4.

⁵⁹ Dio Chry., 33.39. But Bost-Pouderon (2006) 1.48, 81–82; (2011) 6, 38–39 treats 63–64 as perhaps inauthentic.

⁶⁰ Dio Chry., 33.36.

with which this period's Greek literature, especially the novel, endowed Phoenicians. For instance, some Greek novels depict Phoenicians as conversant in Greek cultural forms, versed in *paideia*, or participating relatively seamlessly in the values and ethics of a broader Greek world. Heliodorus' *Aethiopica* and Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon* respectively feature an author/narrator from Emesa and protagonists from Sidon who have such traits. Yet, other novels, such as *The Ephesian Tale* and the fragmentary *Phoeniciaca* frame Phoenicians as exotic, barbarous, and sexually unrestrained. Philostratus' *Heroicus* arguably exploits this split in Greek representations of Phoenicians to stage a Phoenician merchant who indulges in Near Eastern luxury, exoticism, and materiality but seeks to learn about Homer from the ghost of Protesilaus.⁶¹ Compellingly, Heliodorus' "heteroglossic" *Aethiopica* humorizes and critiques sophistic self-position and literary convention by staging characters who, while positioned on the margins of the Greek world, confound mainstream identity categories and frame even "natural" or "real" identities as discursive positions. His work presents Charikleia, a primary character who is kidnapped and expatriated at birth, as an Ethiopian whose "real" ethnic identity is disguised by her deceptively snow-white skin, fluency in Greek, complete ignorance of her origins, and acculturation into the Greek Mediterranean world. Likewise, the work "reveals" Homer and another principal character with Greek cultural traits to be Egyptians. The text's emphasis on the ambivalence between "being" and "seeming," the entanglement of Greek and barbarian performance, the discursive construction of "real" identities, and the "unmasking" of "real" ethnic barbarians coheres thematically with the revelation with which the author ends his novel. Heliodorus, hitherto anonymous, states that his Greek narrative was all along the work of a Phoenician.⁶²

Dio's treatment of Tarsians as (Syro)Phoenicians likewise discursively constructs a "real" ethnic and ethical barbarian character lurking beneath an exterior that menacingly resembles those of legitimate Greeks. It therefore hints at a broader anxiety that people with "barbarian" lineages could displace "real Greeks" through mimicry. Easterners could pose as Greeks and even substitute for them, but their external behaviors and characteristics did not so much make them Greek as concealed barbarian subjects.

⁶¹ For Zeitlin (2001) 264–66, the Phoenician interlocutor of Philostratus' *Heroicus* embodies this tension. Stephens (2008): ethnicity in the ancient novel. Morgan (2009) examines Ethiopia and Emesa as sites of both sun worship and classical Hellenic ideals in Philostratus' *VA* and Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*.

⁶² Whitmarsh (1998) 96–107, 124 (101 quoted); now (2011) 125–28; König (2009) 21–22. Relevant passages are 2.21.4–6, 2.33, 3.14.2–4, 4.8, 7.11.4, 7.12.4, 8.3.2, 8.3.5, 8.17.3, 10.7.5.

When Plutarch argued that the distinction between a Greek and a barbarian was moral, not externally cultural, he contributed to a discourse that could endow certain Greeks with morally reprehensible ethnic “barbarian” interiors regardless of their cultural practices or their actual ethnic self-definitions.⁶³ In this vein, Dio inscribes the Tarsians with depraved ethical traits suggesting Syro-Phoenician ethnic descent even if they exhibited no meaningful ethno-cultural sameness with Phoenicians. And if Tarsians acted like good Greek citizens, it somehow constituted “evidence” for their internal depravity, and marked how far they would go to conceal it.

Conclusion

While the date of Dio’s *First Tarsian Oration* has been disputed, it is even more difficult to verify what type of oratorical performance it constituted.⁶⁴ Dio may have performed before actual Tarsians, or, more likely, he produced a literary enactment of his Greekness through an imagined encounter with them. Likewise, Dio may have been leveling a serious critique and attack against the Tarsians’ Greekness. Yet, given that his *Second Tarsian Oration* treats Tarsus as a legitimate Greek city plagued by certain civic problems, his speech could have been received as a humorous presentation of anxious questions that many contemporary Greeks were perhaps asking: where was the slippage from a Greek to a barbarian disposition to be located, and how were Greeks to behave in order to prevent such slippage? After all, if androgynous barbarians could disguise themselves as moderate Greeks, Greeks who did not restrain their transgressive passions could also err into fashioning a barbarian or “Phoenician” ethos not immediately perceptible to the eye. In fact, ethnic Greeks who cultivated classical Greek culture but engaged in sexually deviant activity, as some did, could risk being deemed “barbarians” or “Phoenicians” in moral terms. Or worse, their immorality could suggest that their alleged ethnic lineages were not so Greek after all. Whatever the interpretive possibilities, within the speech the image of the Tarsian as a disguised eastern “he-woman” facilitated Dio’s signification of his Greek subjectivity, and he located the division between moderate Greek male and depraved androgynous ethnic easterner in Tarsus’ bawdy sound. Because the Tarsians were located at the threshold of what Dio framed to be the Greek and eastern worlds, they could most

⁶³ Plut., *De Alex. Fort.*, 1.329C–D outlines how Alexander the Great taught his subjects to distinguish Greeks from barbarians by assessing not external traits but virtue and knavery.

⁶⁴ Kokkinia (2007) 420; Bost-Pouderon (2006) 1.31–39 present debate.

suitably be framed as vulnerable to the tainted ethos or disease of the Syrian *ethnos*, especially Syro-Phoenicians.

Dio's rhetoric demonstrates how Roman imperialism, for which Greek sophists were both vital conduits and subjects, brought categories of ethnicity, social status, and gender, along with their intersections and contestations, into signification. It also exemplifies how they accumulated an imperial "knowledge" that relegated the Near East to the periphery of Greekness, for which classical Greek lands constituted the central core. The Tarsians, as represented in the speech, were a source of anxiety because while resembling and imitating Greeks, they also possessed a slippage or lack. Their ability to appear Greek could therefore unravel "real" Hellenism if observers did not draw the proper distinctions.⁶⁵ This anxiety even prompted Arrian's Epictetus to frame a Jew as an actor (*hypokritēs*) in such a mold, and he therefore asked, "Why, being a Jew, do you play the part (ὑποκρίνη) of Greeks? Do you not see how each is called a Jew, a Syrian, or an Egyptian?"⁶⁶ In a similar fashion, Dio, staging himself as a discerning Greek philosopher who embodied classical traditions, exposed the Tarsians as "actual" ethnic barbarians performing as Greeks, and before the putative gaze of his Tarsian mimics, Dio too struck a pose and performed. That pose, that performance, was his Greekness. The next two chapters examine how Lucian's corpus and his *On the Syrian Goddess* critique such modes of cultural production.

⁶⁵ Bhabha (1994) 74–77: the colonial stereotype constitutes a mirror image and fetish that "represents the simultaneous play between metaphor as substitution (masking absence and difference) and metonymy (which continuously registers the perceived lack)."

⁶⁶ The MSS of Epictetus, *Dis.* 2.9.19, conveyed by Arrian, presents reading. Swain (2009a) 35–36 (including n. 9).

The theater of empire
Lucian, cultural performance, and Roman rule

As the previous chapter stresses, Dio's "exposure" of the Tarsians as ethnic barbarians and ethical Syro-Phoenicians coheres with how Roman imperial sophists located the Near East beyond the margins of legitimate Greek culture. His rhetoric also fits into a broader discourse on Syrian or eastern androgyny through which Greek and Roman authors, including Cicero, framed masculine self-positioning. During the second century CE, Lucian of Samosata and the Christians Justin Martyr and Tatian, all of whom in various ways assumed the positions of Syrians in their works, confronted and interacted with the performative context that Dio represents. While demonstrating mastery of the cultural idioms that sophists prioritized, they nonetheless critiqued Greek sophistic practices underpinned by imperial Rome.¹ Lucian especially did so by assuming the perspective of Syrian narrators or staging Syrian comic characters. Accordingly, whatever Lucian's "biographical" ethnic affiliations were, this chapter treats him as a "Syrian" author because he frequently assumed or staged Syrian vantage points.

As recent scholarship has noted, Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess* and the texts of Justin Martyr and Tatian staged their authors or narrators as Syrians. They thereby implemented forms of cultural "hybridity" that destabilized binary distinctions between "Greek" and "barbarian" and Hellenism and Christianity. Their integration of Greek and putatively "Assyrian" or "barbarian" values into their texts' claims to authority framed them as "doubling" figures of similarity and disavowal, as "mimic" of and "menace" to imperial power-holders and Greek sophists.² Through these properties, such authors participated in broader sophistic debates concerning what it meant to be "cultured" (*pepaideumenoi*), and, like sophists, they disputed the proper representation of the divine, the accurate semiotic connection

¹ Nasrallah (2005) 292 emphasizes that their "deployment of ethnic, cultic, and local categories" were "part of their colonial condition . . . of real and epistemic violence under Rome and its (re)production of a Greek cultural hegemony."

² Lyman (2007) 160–69.

between word and deed, and what distinguished correct imitation from the distortions of innovation.³ In fact, while displaying mastery of *paideia*, ethical self-maintenance, and public performance that characterized Greek sophists, they subjected Hellenism, its origin, and its significance to diverse interpretations. When Philo of Byblus, for example, claimed that Hesiod and Homer had erroneously imitated the divine cosmogony of a Phoenician named Sanchouniathos, he engaged this broader discourse.⁴ When Josephus' *Against Apion* cited the Babylonian Berossus and the Egyptian Manetho (or ps.-Manetho), along with Greek sources, to argue that Jews had an older historical tradition and superior *politeia* to those of Greeks, he navigated this debate too.⁵

It was in this vein that Lucian, Justin Martyr, and Tatian adeptly navigated Greek *paideia* while assuming positions of marginality, antagonism, or discrepant modes of viewing toward its mainstream values.⁶ For them, even ostensibly cultured sophists could be construed as "uncultured" or flawed because they represented the divine improperly, conflated truth and verisimilitude, or misinterpreted unjust and impious deeds as just and pious. Moreover, these authors posited challenges to the imperial "knowledge" that Greeks and Romans had accumulated and disseminated regarding the inherently "uncultured" status of provincials. Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess*, the topic of chapter 10, vividly illustrates this theme. But first this chapter examines how the works of Lucian, Justin Martyr, and Tatian framed the imperial "knowledge" of Greek sophists and Roman authorities as *doxa*. In this way, they critiqued its production and how it situated classical idioms, lands, and pasts at the center of Greekness.

***Doxa* and Syrian provincial literature**

As Lucian, Justin, and Tatian engaged the disputative context just described, they framed Roman imperial authority and Greek sophistic culture as being and producing *doxa* (from the Greek impersonal verb *dokei*, meaning to seem, appear, or resemble). Following Plato, these authors formulated *doxa* as a perception, belief, opinion, expectation, or "appearance" of reality that, although potentially being true, often obscures or distorts

³ Nasrallah (2010) 130–54 provides important elaboration.

⁴ *FGrH* 790.1, 2 (804 and 813) quoting Eusebius.

⁵ Josephus, *Ap.* 1.69–320; 2.151–291. *FGrH* 609, 680; Stern (1974) nos. 9–10 treat Manetho and Berossus.

⁶ Nasrallah (2005) 294–310; (2010) 130–54, 236–48 on Lucian, Tatian, and Justin Martyr. Goldhill (2001b) 172–84; Nasrallah (2010) 268–292 provide similar approaches to Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian.

knowledge of the real or true. It encompassed beliefs, ghostly apparitions, and material objects that obstructed the gaze from “real” or sublimely ideal forms.⁷ Because *doxa* was any fiction of verisimilitude concealing or displacing something “real,” it was experienced or intentionally misread as real. *Doxa* therefore described interrelated and mutually constituting objective manifestations and subjective faculties; it indexed the flawed perceptions of subjects and the visible or perceptible “appearances” of the material world that they mistook or substituted for the real.

The Syrian authors featured in this chapter followed Plato in distinguishing *doxa* from “knowledge” (*gnōmē* and *epistēmē*) of what is real, and they associated it with *philodoxoi*, or “lovers of glory” who “opined” the appearance of beauty or goodness accessible to sensory perceptions but did not discern their ineffable reality (or lack thereof) beyond appearance.⁸ This formulation also dovetails with modern interpretations of *doxa* as practices whose legitimacy are so embedded in everyday performance that practitioners never consciously critique them unless prompted by scrutinizing observers.⁹ By critically examining *doxa*, these authors framed Greek *paideia* as modes of performance that the material and ideological formations of Roman imperialism had stabilized as “real” or legitimate; *paideia* was not simply an authentic form of Greekness that classical predecessors had transmitted. In fact, Justin Martyr and Tatian conceived of Roman imperial power and the primacy of Greek classical performance as so mutually constitutive that they often conflated them. As Lucian and such authors mimicked contemporary sophists, they critiqued how Greeks and Romans manipulated signs, images, and the relation between words and deeds to produce *doxa* and thereby Greekness (or Greco-Romanness). As a result, they posited that declamation, Atticism, and *paideia* did not simply constitute an imitative engagement with Greekness’ venerable past but that they were how this past was strategically staged and performed. Performance in turn bolstered the prevailing imperial and cultural hierarchy, helped replicate the material and economic conditions determining cultural praxis, and

⁷ Pl., *Resp.* 5.475E-480; *Ti.* 51D-E; *Phil.* 37d. *Doxa* could also describe apparitions or dreams (Aes, *Ag.* 275, *Ch.* 1051; Eur., *Rh.* 780; Philostr., *VA* 1.23) or the embalming and dressing of a corpse to make it appear living (Xen. *Eph.*, 5.1.9–11). Lucian, *Herm.* 64, which argues that the *schēma* and *doxa* of philosophers should be ignored, links *doxa* closely to material appearance.

⁸ For instance, Pl., *Resp.* 5.475E-480; *Ti.* 51D-E; *Phil.* 37d. *Doxa* can be “true” when it conforms to reality or knowledge, but its variable nature produces false opinions and appearances. Whitmarsh (2011) 1–3 discusses how *The Ephesian Tale*’s Aigaleus invents the *doxa* that his deceased wife is living so that he can fornicate and converse with her (even while realizing the *doxa*).

⁹ Bourdieu (1977) 164–68; (1990) 56–57 describes *doxa* as the intersection of subjective strategies and objective sets of rules that constitute embodied practice. Arnal (2008) 55–63 examines Bourdieu’s formulations, the letters of Paul, and imperial *doxa*.

generated the unstable binary of “Greek” and “barbarian.” In this sense, performance produced *doxa*; *doxa* was performed.

As this chapter stresses, Lucian and Greek-writing Syrian authors framed *doxa* as experiences of the social world, cultural categories, and historical pasts that subjects created through performative acts. While *doxa* could index the social status, glory, or reputation of *philodoxoi*, its inherent semantic range and ambiguity were exploited by Lucian and Syrian provincial authors. Such authors framed sophists’ pursuit of social stature and prestige as embedded in their ability to stage experiences of reality in which audiences mistook “appearances,” “opinions,” and “expectations” for what was real.¹⁰ As I suggest, even when Lucian, Justin Martyr, and Tatian ostensibly used the word *doxa* to refer to contemporaries’ esteemed reputations or pursuit of glory, their usage harnessed the word’s semantic range in ways that connoted for readers how sophists, *philodoxoi*, or other “actors” asserted social claims by “seeming” to be what they staged themselves as being. As their repetitive acts and strategic positions determined how viewers perceived legitimate Greek cultural practice and tradition, they thereby produced *doxa(i)* of what constituted the social world, its embedded cultural categories, and its historical pasts.

The next two chapters accordingly examine how Lucian’s corpus in general, and *On the Syrian Goddess* more specifically, confront this world of *doxa*. They also cursorily observe how Christian authors such as Justin and Tatian too critiqued Roman imperial *doxa* and its stabilization of Greek culture. Just as Lucian staged “others,” “barbarians,” or Syrian narrators and characters who critiqued contemporary Greek practice, Justin and Tatian significantly positioned themselves as Syrian narrators. These chapters cannot give Justin and Tatian intensive examination or even discuss Theophilus of Antioch at all, and they cannot address the riddle of how Justin’s *First Apology* relates to his *Second Apology*. But by consulting Justin and Tatian, they locate Lucian’s texts in a broader “Syrian” critique of how contemporary Greeks and Romans produced and performed culture.¹¹

By exploring how Lucian’s corpus facilitates critique of the production of *doxa*, the next two chapters pursue one valid interpretation for how ancient readers or auditors experienced Lucian’s work. Such experience

¹⁰ Gassino (2010) 93–98 likewise examines how *pseudos* complicates *logos* in Lucian’s works.

¹¹ Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 1 situates Justin as a native of Neapolis in Samaria. Tatian, *Ad Gr.* 42 frames Tatian as an “Assyrian.” This chapter cannot provide systematic exhaustive examination of these authors and their scholarly traditions and debates. Minns and Parvis (2009) 1–31 examine the manuscript tradition behind Justin’s two *Apologies*, the relationship between the texts, and their genre status. These issues do not affect my analysis of specific passages.

can however be interpreted in other ways. In fact, some might argue that Lucian's works had no cultural implications and did not prompt contemplation of social positioning. According to such logic, readers could have experienced their exploration of human contradiction, routine violation of expectation, and frequent "shock-value" as mere entertainment. But one can also cite reasons why Lucian's works could have indeed stimulated profound reflection on social performance and the production of culture among his readers. For one, Lucian's works noticeably depart from those of most (even if not all) extant sophistic authors in one significant respect. Many of Lucian's texts reflect a preoccupation with staging narrators and characters who perform as Greeks despite their "barbarian" origins or their self-positioning as external and critical observers of Greek performance and spectacle. This is not to claim that Lucian's corpus and those of Syrian Christian authors do not share common ground with those of Greek sophists generally. Many surviving works of imperial Greek sophists thematized cultural practice, spectacle, and theatrical performance and mimicked, parodied, or reinvented the classical past and classical culture in ways that cohere with Lucian's works. Lucian was accordingly not alone in observing the production of contemporary Greek culture to be a creative enterprise. But Lucian's tendency to frame his "legitimately Greek" narrators or main characters as "outsiders" or barbarians, one shared with Justin and Tatian, is distinctive and was likely to have been meaningful to his readership.

Second, certain segments of Lucian's readership probably experienced his works as critiques of cultural production even if his readers' experiences of his texts were inconsistent or unstable. What was mere entertainment for some could have been endowed with deeper values and significations by others. Lucian's frequent staging of "barbarian" or "other" narrators and primary characters, who critiqued Greek sophists even while exhibiting their definitive cultural characteristics, therefore conceivably engendered dispositions among readers ranging from mere entertainment to deeply embedded cultural examination. While it may be impossible to determine Lucian's "authorial intent," it must be stressed that an author's meaning is produced by and situated in the "complex interrelations between the text and the created framing *context*." Texts structure, embody, and determine dialogic encounters between author and audience in ways that produce experiences of authorial intention for readers.¹² The ancient experience of Lucian's "authorial intent" was likely varied, as it is among readers today. Engagements with Lucian's texts and his "authorial intent" therefore

¹² Whitmarsh (2005b) 110–11 discusses Bakhtin's "secondary author." Italics by Whitmarsh.

prompted certain readers to reflect on *doxa* and the production of social categories and cultural difference through performance.

To illuminate the themes outlined above, this chapter does not implement a narrow, detailed focus on individual works and their narrative progression. It instead emphasizes passages of Lucian from diverse works that most specifically develop the social and cultural implications of performance, theatricality, and the production of *doxa* amid the putative “externality” or “otherness” of his narrators and characters. These passages, I suggest, exemplify how Lucian’s works stimulated reflections on the performances through which people assumed roles in the social world and generated cultural boundaries that gave their social positioning coherence. While taken from an assortment of Lucian’s works, these passages and episodes are not randomly associated, but they constitute culturally charged passages and episodes that prompted Lucian’s audience to reflect on their social position in an imperial context. The following sections examine how.

The theater of Lucian’s corpus

Many of Lucian’s texts humorously explore contemporary sophistic practices, and his narrators or central characters often hint that their author was from Samosata in Syria.¹³ But such Syrian characters and narrators did not constitute transparent reflections of their author’s ethno-cultural origins; they were assumed masks and staged characters enabling the author, whoever he “really” was, to critique the production of Greekness, its “barbarian” counterparts, and the antagonisms between them.¹⁴ Although not written with Lucian’s typical bombast and blatant satirizing, his treatise *On the Syrian Goddess*, whose Lucianic authorship scholars have endorsed over the last decade, in certain ways exemplifies how Lucian’s comic pastiches stimulated critique and examination of contemporary society.¹⁵ More specifically,

¹³ Lucian, *Pisc.* 19; *Bis Acc.* 27; *Scyth.* 9; *Hist. conscr.* 24.

¹⁴ Richter (2011) 146–47 clarifies this issue.

¹⁵ The authenticity of *On the Syrian Goddess* as Lucian’s has long been debated. If the work is interpreted as the straightforward description of a sincere pilgrim, it is inconsistent with Lucian’s humorous critiques of cult practices in other works, but if read as a subtle satire of Hierapolis, it is inconsistent with Lucian’s typical blatant and bombastic satirizing. But the perceptive arguments of Lightfoot (2003) 184–208 and her examination of Lucianic parallels for the content and style of *On the Syrian Goddess* (despite its pseudo-Ionic usage) verify its authenticity. The text can be read as a comic pastiche of Herodotean ethnographic history that toys with historiography’s inherent expectations, disrupts the reader’s ability to distinguish between truth and fiction, and challenges the period’s prevailing cultural maps. The Lucianic attribution is supported by Goldhill (2002) 78–82; Elsner (2001b) 153; König (2009) 26; Richter (2011) 230–42.

the text offers a creative pastiche of the ethnographic historiography practiced by Herodotus and emulators of his tradition, which imperial Greek sophists harnessed in their formulations of “barbarian” culture.¹⁶ While doing so, it comments on the complexities of identity production and cultural categorization produced within a Roman imperial context. In this sense, Lucian did not produce anti-imperial propaganda, but he examined how contemporary philosophers, sophists, and Roman power-holders were “ordering knowledge.”¹⁷ By enacting a pastiche of ethnographic composition, *On the Syrian Goddess* explores and critiques how Greek sophists, while empowered by and subject to Roman power-holders, produced *doxa*.

Before proceeding to *On the Syrian Goddess*, which the next chapter explores, these following sections examine certain dispositions of Lucian’s corpus that complicate the construction of historical pasts and representations of the present. Due to spatial constraints, they do not provide detailed exploration of Lucian’s individual works, but they make observations informed by examples or episodes from Lucian’s texts in general. Recent scholarship has explored how Lucian’s works challenge beliefs in universal, objective, infallible, and totalizing forms of knowledge, whether philosophical, historical, or social. Because such dispositions frame the next chapter’s analysis of *On the Syrian Goddess*, these sections explore such dispositions and, on occasion, how they reflect Lucian’s engagement of classical literature. But they primarily examine how these dispositions facilitate critiques of the production of history, the social world, and the cultural performances that they authorize.

Lucian’s comic dialogues, *prolaliai*, and other treatises were circumscribed by classical sophistic trends and concerns, and they consciously engaged and imitated a stable corpus of classical literature. Despite this, they still consistently generated doubts concerning the stability of origins and models referenced by texts and artistic images or imitated in social practice. Put another way, they indicated that phenomena which texts, art, or deeds purport to imitate or for which they produce likenesses, images, or representations are in fact brought into signification through textual composition or social performance. This disposition significantly spells a broader critique of how imperial Greek sophists performed and produced classical culture, how they organized philosophical “knowledge” of the

¹⁶ “Ethnography” here does not describe a recognized ancient Greek literary genre but strains of historiography modeled on Herodotus’ composition and featuring observers’ narratives of foreign peoples. Dench (2008).

¹⁷ König and Whitmarsh (2007) 13–14, 38.

cosmos, and how they enacted historical exempla. If declamation, erudite speeches, and other modes of performance employed by sophists were to imitate, engage, and innovate upon the classical past, then Lucian's works highlighted the "fiction" of such endeavors and stressed that declamation and similar sophistic activity did not constitute the replication of classical models, but their production and stabilization. Origins, models, and genres, even those that Lucian mimicked, did not simply exist. While perhaps materializing in the past, social subjects determined and perpetuated at present moments their status as origins, models, and genres in ways that shaped interpretations or constructions of the past.¹⁸ In this sense, history and origins were "staged," and their staging produced and validated sophistic culture.

Although Lucian's works, like those of many sophists, were embedded in creative engagement with Greek classical literature, a classical past, and *paideia*, they frequently divested classical origins and models of their historical or epistemological fixity. While parodizing philosophical claims of esoteric cosmic knowledge or moral authority, Lucian's *True Histories*, for instance, questions the stability of models and origins, whether literary or historical, beyond the text and its performance. At its beginning, the author (hitherto anonymous) claims to mimic and parodize diverse epic, philosophical, and historiographical models that had disseminated fictions (*pseumata*) appearing to be true. He also states that the only truth that he posits is that his work is completely false, whereas his predecessors wrote fiction that people believed to be truthful.¹⁹ Then, after assuming the position of narrator and primary character, who eventually describes himself as "Lucian," he voyages to the Isle of the Blessed and meets authors, literary characters, and historical figures linked to the models that he parodizes. On the Isle, fictional (especially Homeric) characters and their creators even inhabit a shared social space, but with the fictional characters maintaining autonomous existence. Both types have become, in a sense, equally historical, yet equally fictive. Many such characters also possess the stock (if humorous) traits that classical literature generally associated with them. Empedocles, who famously plunged into Mount Etna, is for instance thoroughly burnt. But in many instances, these "models" humorously parody or deviate from their canonical traits. For example, while the text's opening explicitly cites Homer's fictional character Odysseus as his model, the

¹⁸ Benjamin (1968) 256–57, 263–66.

¹⁹ Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 1.2–4. Ní-Mheallaigh (2009) and Kim (2010b) 151–74 inform my discussion on origins, models, and the ability of fiction to create experiences of reality. Georgiadou and Larmour (1998a) 23–43; (1998b) treat parody of philosophy.

narrator “Lucian” couriers (but never delivers) a letter that Odysseus wrote to Calypso, in which he regrets leaving her and rejecting the immortality that she offered. While interrogating Homer himself, he learns that he is not blind. He also discovers that Plato lived in the fictional city of which he had written. Finally, he learns hitherto unknown information regarding the (after)lives of Herodotus and Ctesias of Cnidus. They inhabited the Isle of the Wicked because of their mendacious texts, which (ironically) had inspired the author to stage the mendacious narrator “Lucian” and his fictive history.²⁰ In sum, Lucian’s narrative humorously rewrites the unstable models and origins, whether literary or historical, that it imitates and parodizes. While reveling in its fiction, it also premises the fiction and mutability of origins, models, and narratives of past figures and foreign peoples that were widely accepted as true and credible, that had, in a sense, become “real” for viewers. Even the author Lucian, as represented by the purely fictive narrator “Lucian,” is an unstable, transforming, and rewritten “original.”²¹

Other Lucianic texts similarly represent classical figures or characters that contemporary Greeks treated as historical or literary models. They do so in ways that distort or deviate from convention or otherwise parody widespread knowledge about them. The figure of Homer notably constitutes such an unstable “model.” In *True Histories*, the narrator learns from Homer himself that he had been a Babylonian captive named Tigranes, but in another text, the philosopher Pythagoras, fittingly reincarnated as a rooster, states that Homer had been a Bactrian camel during the Trojan War.²² While these versions of Homer (and Pythagoras) were dubious, they were empirically no easier to verify or disprove than more “realistic” presentations of Homer, whom contemporary Greeks and sophists had historicized or creatively fictionalized in numerous ways.²³ Likewise, in *Dialogues of the Dead*, Cerberus, Hades’ gate-keeping beast, claims to have witnessed how the shade of Socrates, who famously thwarted Alcibiades’ advances and died with philosophical detachment, was so terrified of death that he screamed and wept for his boy-lovers.²⁴ These humorous re-stagings of Homer and Socrates highlighted the instability of past models and the

²⁰ Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 1.2–4, 2.17, 2.20–21, 2.29, 2.31, 2.35. Ní-Mheallaigh (2009), esp. 21; Georgiadou and Larmour (1998a) 221, Kim (2010b) 151–62, who stresses “Lucian’s” engagement with Homer’s Odysseus, prompt these observations.

²¹ Kim (2010) 174; Ní-Mheallaigh (2010) 128–30.

²² Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 2.20; *Gall.* 17. Georgiadou and Larmour (1998a) 201; Kim (2010b) 162–69 treat this passage and other versions of Homer’s origins. Heliod., *Aeth.* 3.14.2–4 claims that Homer was Egyptian.

²³ Whitmarsh (2011) 114, n. 36.

²⁴ Lucian, *Dial. Mort.* 4 (21).

historically and socially productive power of contemporary literary performance. Lucian was not alone in such critique. While Justin and Tatian did not challenge the absolute validity of models and origins, they claimed that contemporary Greeks had incorrectly historicized the origins of Hellenism in ways that obscured the potency of its Near Eastern sources.²⁵ Just as classical authors like Herodotus and Plato themselves had often noted the Greeks' debt to numerous barbarian societies, they stressed that imperial Greeks neglected how their classical forebears had counterfeited and distorted the doctrines of Moses and stolen their customs from foreigners. They also criticized sophists for pretending that Atticism encapsulated legitimate Greekness even when numerous competing forms of Greekness existed.²⁶ In short, sophists disguised classical sources as "origins" of Greek thought and practice when they in fact imitated barbarian models.

In Lucian's corpus, the staging of classical models parallels the production of divinities. Divine likenesses, whether consisting of statuary or literary manifestations, were not copies of "real" divinities; they instead brought gods into signification. For instance, in *Zeus the Tragedian*, Zeus demonstrates his awareness that he is a literary figure engaging in an act. After Hera notes that Zeus presents monologues in the manner of tragic actors, he and his fellow deities, uncertain about how to address an Olympian assembly, consider using Homer and then Demosthenes as points of reference.²⁷ When the assembly convenes, the gods arrive as cult statues that sculptors had shaped from inanimate material. The text in this sense reduces gods to cultural artifacts, "parodic reflections of their makers."²⁸ Lucian's presentation of Olympian divinities, as molding their characters according to Homeric, tragic, or rhetorical conventions or literally being statues, indicated that gods were discursive or material images that literary or artistic practice, authors or sculptors, brought into signification. Despite this, Greeks often treated such representations as copies of real gods.²⁹ This precise semiotic lapse irked Justin Martyr and Tatian, who criticized Greeks and Romans for venerating statues as gods and for believing that divinities were as classical literature sculpted them. Such

²⁵ Certain Greeks, including Plutarch and Philostratus (in *VA*), argued for the "originality" and primacy of Greek thought despite Egypt's reputation as a source of Greek wisdom. Richter (2011) 177–85, 192–206.

²⁶ Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 1, 44, 59–66; *Apol. Min.* 13; Tatian, *Ad Gr.* 1, 35–40.

²⁷ Lucian, *Iup. Trag.* 5, 14–15.

²⁸ Branham (1989) 170. Lucian, *Iup. Trag.* 8–10. In *Philops.* 18–20, craven liars treat statues as animate beings, not material reflections of their creators. Ogden (2005) 170–78 and, generally for *Philops.*, (2007).

²⁹ This theme prevails in Lucian, *Sac.*, especially 5–11. Also, *Iup. Trag.* 41. Elsner (1996) 529–30; (2007) 11–12, 46–47 analyzes statues as gods.

images, often demon-induced, prompted viewers to experience a false reality concealing the divine *Logos*.³⁰

The instability of origins and models also persists in Lucian's treatment of genre and especially the Platonic dialogue, whose ludic features and defiance of simple epistemologies he harnessed.³¹ Certain of Lucian's texts ostentatiously manipulated and interwove canonical genres of Greek literature, especially those of weighty philosophic dialogue and humorous Old Comedy, to produce innovative textual frames. One of Lucian's texts therefore compares his new genres to centaurs, and in another instance his narrator associates himself with Prometheus, who invented humanity by mixing male and female.³² While certainly demonstrating his mimicry of classical traditions, whose mastery he put on display, Lucian's hybridization of genre also reoriented classical models as he subjected them to new modes of textual performance and thereby delineated his Lucian "otherness" to mainstream conventions.³³ Likewise, by staging interplays and conflicts among the expectations embedded in the genres of epic, tragedy, comedy, historiography, and philosophical dialogue within single works, Lucian's texts challenged the "mimetic validity of serious mythological poetry" and inspired critique of philosophical forms of argumentation, inquiry, and claims to esoteric, cosmic or moral knowledge.³⁴ For instance, in *Symposium*, a dialogue modeled on Plato's own notable symposiastic treatise, the interlocutor Lykinos describes how philosophers attended a wedding feast in which they flagrantly violated their moral tenets. He then proceeds to narrate how they engaged in a humorously Aristophanic variation of epic combat as they mimicked the mythical battle between Lapinths and Centaurs.³⁵ Such interweavings invited readers to scrutinize how classical genres and their status as models, even if transmitted from the past, were not essential and immutable facts but cultural products stabilized by contemporary practice and performance. By pitting established genres and their conventions against each other to produce new textual forms, Lucian's dialogues and *prolaliai* highlighted the artifice of genre, its inherent expectations, and the terms of its production.

If origins, models, genres, and pasts were not so much imitated as "staged" and "produced" in Lucian's corpus, it was in part because Lucian's

³⁰ Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 5, 9–10, 54–56; *Apol. Min.* 4–5; Tatian, *Ad Gr.* 7–15, 22.

³¹ Ní-Mheallaigh (2005) thus develops Lucian's engagement with Plato.

³² Lucian, *Zeux.* 1–2, 12; *Bacc.* 5; *Bis Acc.* 33–34; *Prometh. in verb.* 6–7.

³³ Lucian's "discurso de alteridade" and his scrutiny of accepted practices from positions of externality or otherness facilitate his cultural critique. Brandão (2001), esp. 27 (cited).

³⁴ Branham (1989) 163–77 (176 quoted) on *Iup. Trag.*; Camerotto (2009) 1–8, 24–47 on *Icaromen*.

³⁵ Branham (1989) 104–23; Johnson (2010) 175–78.

texts represented a world in which performance generated origins, models, pasts, and thereby identities and social categories. They framed the world as a “theater” or “stage” (*theatron* or *skēnē*) in which identities, social categories, and pasts were produced through spectacles of performance in which actors (*hypokritai*) created “characters” (*schēmata*) and “faces/masks” (*prosōpa*).³⁶ Such actors effectively became what they performed, unless “exposed” or framed as otherwise by scrutinizing observers. False philosophers, for instance, feigned elevated and moral *schēmata* and claimed to possess esoteric knowledge despite their immorality and ignorance; they wore masks (*prosōpeia*) like tragic actors.³⁷ In this sense, Lucian’s emphasis on the “theatrical” underpinnings of the social order, historical memory, and perceptions of divinities, while indexing an intensive encounter with classical tragedy and comedy in general, was likely to have been informed by his engagement with Aristophanes, whose comic themes Lucian often interwove with philosophical dialogue.³⁸ Aristophanes’ comic iterations of famous mythical figures notably prompted his Athenian audience to contemplate how epic and tragic poetry framed divine or heroic “models,” and his plays’ frequent integration of their audience into their dramatic illusion also stimulated its members to experience the civic order as a “stage,” a product of performance.³⁹

Alongside such ancient comic precedents, Lucian’s theatrical treatment of the world coheres with a vision commonly shared by Roman imperial *pepaideumenoi* and, quite noticeably, the works of Justin and Tatian. These Syrian authors also represented the Roman empire as a world of staged masks in which actors manipulated the relationship between copy and model. But unlike Lucian, they indicated that demons stimulated such masks and manipulation by inciting humans to conceal the true *Logos* beneath a veil of deceptive material images and acts. Demons had prompted sculptors and artists to create images of gods that summoned “actual” gods into signification, with hero- and emperor-worship exemplifying the production of human-made deities. In this theatrical world,

³⁶ In Lucian, *Icaromen.* 17, Menippus views from the moon what everyone in the world’s “theater” does. Menippus of *Necy.* 16 frames life as the theatrical crafting of *schēmata*. Lucian’s formulation of theater is emphasized by Whitmarsh (2001a) 254–57, who notes that “theatricalization” of Greek literature extended to dining rooms, courts, and other “private” spaces, where Lucian’s works were likely read/performed. See now Schmitz (2010) 301–9.

³⁷ Lucian, *Icaromen.* 29, spoken by Zeus under Menippus’ influence.

³⁸ Karavas (2005): Lucian and tragedy. Anderson (1982) 74–78 on Old Comedy and dialogue. Georgiadou and Larmour (1998a) 24–27 examine Aristophanic references in *True Histories* and Camerotto (2009) 14–24 in *Icaromenippus*.

³⁹ Slater (2003) generally treats Aristophanes’ metatheatrics, and 132–49 examines this feature in *Birds*. Goldhill and Osborne (1999) examine the “theater” of Athens.

people assumed the name, appearance, and token behaviors of just, cultured, and pious philosophers as disguises for uncultured and impious characters.⁴⁰ Although it did not integrate demons, Lucian's conceptualization of the Greco-Roman world as a "theater" of actors who assumed (and became) "characters" and "faces/masks" cohered with the formulation of Justin and Tatian.

Even more, Lucian's texts constituted literary performances of the theatrical world that they represent. His works, like those of many Greeks, were performed orally, and their reading performers in this sense enacted his texts' narrators for audiences. In turn, the enacted narrators, by imitating other characters, produced their own "fixed" models and set in play complex chains of mimicry.⁴¹ Lucian's *Apology*, for example, stages and enacts an anonymous narrator who impersonates his "friend" and putative critic Sabinus. While addressing Sabinus directly that he was going to "put on his *prosōpon*" and prepare a "*skēnē*," he, impersonating Sabinus, accuses himself of being like a bad tragic *hypokritēs* playing the part of Agamemnon, Creon, or Heracles.⁴² While the reading/listening audience technically stands in for Sabinus, whom the narrator directly addresses as reader, the performing reader also brings Sabinus into signification by staging and enacting the narrator who assumes the absent (and hence unknown) Sabinus' "face." Similarly, in *Nigrinus* the narrator "Lucian," who references himself by name, addresses a letter explicitly to the philosopher Nigrinus. Yet, "Lucian" embeds within this letter a dialogue in which he describes Nigrinus to an interlocutor, and while claiming to speak not so much through the illustrious mask (*prosōpeion*) of Nigrinus as through his "own face/mask" (*prosōpon*), he still reckons Nigrinus to be the hero whom he represents even if not impersonating him in the first person.⁴³ In this way, he hopes to avoid playing Nigrinus in the manner of bad actors.⁴⁴ But the masks of "Lucian" and Nigrinus are not so distinct after all; at a certain level, "Lucian" stages and performs Nigrinus' character for his audience. Like *True Histories*, *Nigrinus* constitutes one of the few texts in

⁴⁰ Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 1–2, 4.1, 4.8, 5, 9–10, 12, 24–26, 29.4, 57–58 constitute the basis for these brief observations.

⁴¹ Whitmarsh (2001a) 254–57; Webb (2009) 26 for theatrical performance. Plut., *Quaest. Conv.* 7.8 describes how symposiasts performed Plato's dialogues. In Lucian, *Her.* 7; *Zeux.* 1, the narrator indicates that he publicly recited his work.

⁴² Lucian, *Apol.* 2, 5. Whitmarsh (2001a) 291–93 emphasizes that this text is not an epilogue to *On Salaried Positions* but intimately connected with it in ways that subvert the "narratorial voice of the earlier text." Goldhill (2002) 69–71 also explores how "acting" works in the text.

⁴³ Lucian, *Nigr.* 11. The development of this theme and the work's complex structure are explored by Whitmarsh (2001a) 267–79.

⁴⁴ Lucian, *Nigr.* 8–11.

which Lucian inscribes the narrator “Lucian,” as whom Lucian or other oral readers could perform, in ways that generate a *prosōpon* for “Lucian” as author.⁴⁵ But how performers of the narrator/author “Lucian” impersonate the absent Nigrinus is also intriguing. The performing reader, who assumes the face of the author/narrator “Lucian,” also acts as Nigrinus. But he does so for his putative reader Nigrinus, for whom the reading or oral audience substitutes.

Amid such complex role-plays, Lucian’s texts conflated “imitating” a model with “becoming” and “producing” it. From his audience’s perspective, performers, posing as narrators, crafted likenesses of the absent Sabinus and Nigrinus and assumed their *prosōpeia* (masks) or *prosōpa* (faces/masks) for the audience, which paradoxically did the same. In both cases, reading performers and their audience, virtually becoming Sabinus and Nigrinus, generated and stabilized the absent models “Sabinus” and “Nigrinus” (and perhaps even the author “Lucian”!) that constituted the basis for their imitation. In this sense, these texts did not merely “represent” a theatrical world. Even the physical and oral presentation of texts constituted performances through which authors and readers, as actors, assumed *schēmata* and *prosōpa* and produced the (absent) characters that they claimed to imitate.⁴⁶ As performances working within a potently social theater (and not isolated from it), texts thereby staged absent models and “originals.”

The power of cultural performance: mimicry and history in Lucian’s corpus

As stated above, Lucian’s works staged a world of performance and problematic origins, one in which mimicry was not merely the imitation of an existing model but the production of a model and its copy. Contemporary performers, whether acting on stage, posing in everyday society, or writing texts that staged *prosōpa*, produced or became their putative historical or literary models in the same way that pantomime dancers staged or became what they claimed to represent. Lucian’s *On Dance*, which explicitly compares pantomime to declamation as a form of acting (*hypokrisis*) with mimetic features, stresses how easily mimicry as “imitation” could lapse into

⁴⁵ Lucian only ascribes his name to his narrator six times in his entire corpus. Goldhill (2002) 60–89; Ni-Mheallaigh (2010) examine the problems of Lucian’s biography, what his rare use of his name means for authorial positioning, and how it complicates the relationship of author and narrator in ways that destabilize the “contract” rendering authors and their narrators coterminous.

⁴⁶ Whitmarsh (2001a) 274–78.

either “becoming” or the production of a likeness, model, or origin.⁴⁷ For instance, according to Lykinos, the shape-changer Proteus was a “mimetic” (*mimētikos*) dancer who changed *schēmata* (*schēmatizesthai*) and transformed (*metaballesthai*) with such ease that ancient myths erroneously described him as “becoming” his model. In fact, by constantly transforming, dancers “imitated (*mimoumenoi*) Proteus himself.”⁴⁸ Although Lykinos in subsequent passages defends pantomime and other mimetic arts as representing models, historical figures, or mythological characters, he admits that dancers brought into signification the likenesses for which they posed as copies. In fact, Lykinos proceeds to describe how a dancer endeavoring to imitate the madness of Ajax went mad and beat the performer playing Odysseus with a flute. The dancer in effect assumed Ajax’s madness, substituted for the “original” Ajax, and thereby became Ajax for his audience.⁴⁹ According to Lykinos, some members of the audience even experienced the dancer’s madness as that of the “actual” mythical figure Ajax. Others, the more learned, accepted that a stable and distinct discursive model for Ajax existed (as stabilized by classical literature), and they measured the dancer’s performance, which they deemed a poor imitation, against this model.⁵⁰

Such elements of performance in *On Dance* offered critique of sophists who imitated past figures either by declaiming, delivering erudite speeches with classical tropes, or simply by assuming the everyday *schēmata* of orators or philosophers. Since Lykinos explicitly highlights continuities shared by dance, acting, and declamation, it is worth stressing that declamation, like acting or pantomime, crafted historical characters and narratives of a classical past for audiences.⁵¹ Declaimers did not simply imitate the historical Demosthenes, for instance, but prompted belief in the “original” Demosthenes as they imitated him, even if they obviously deviated from this “original.” The audience likewise conspired in the declaimer’s fiction and perhaps even role-played as the Athenian assembly that listened. It could therefore recognize the sophist’s performance to be a fictitious representation of the historical past, and it could use its knowledge of an extant body of written or oral material to assess the sophist’s performance.⁵² But

⁴⁷ Lucian, *Salt*. 65; pantomime and declamation (*meletai*). Schmitz (2010) 306–8 examines how Lucian associates declamation with tragic acting.

⁴⁸ Lucian, *Salt*. 19. ⁴⁹ Lucian, *Salt*. 83.

⁵⁰ Elsner (2007) 68 discusses how likenesses simultaneously facilitate and occlude spectators’ viewing of originals.

⁵¹ Webb (2006a) 39–42 notes how Lykinos’ discussion of dancers and the dancer who played Ajax dovetails with declamation. Likewise, Gunderson (2003) 83 describes how declamation transforms “the real Cicero” into “a historical Cicero and a rhetorical Cicero.”

⁵² Webb (2006a) 39–40 examines how the audience engages in role-play to complement the declaimer.

it did not necessarily discern that the putative historical model and the literary basis against which it measured the sophist's act were also discursively and performatively constituted, as opposed to simply "lost" in the past and fleetingly revived.⁵³ In other words, such fictitious performances helped stabilize their fictive historical or literary models as "real," and by performing fictitious representations within boundaries determined by an extant body of historical and literary material, sophists and their audiences collaborated to generate and recreate an historical past.

Yet, it must also be stressed that declamation often adhered to a narrower range of material than other forms of sophistic performance. As a result, the issues that it raises arguably have even greater implications for more general imitations of historical or literary models in which audiences may not have been so expert. These could yield greater variation and recreation in the production of models and the conflation of "imitating" and "being."⁵⁴ Accordingly, in *Fisherman*, Parrhesiades describes corrupt philosophers as flawed actors not simply because their actions contradicted the philosophical characters that they presented. They had also made viewers believe that the models which they imitated, such as Chrysippus, Plato, and Pythagoras, were paradigms for their corruption.⁵⁵ Because their audiences could not distinguish model from copy, these philosophers had staged and become their models as they recreated past philosophers in their own debauched likeness.

Likewise, even if *ekphrasis* simulated the act of seeing and perceiving a real object and not the representation of something real, its images and representations still summoned into signification premises of ideal or real models on which perceptions are based. These issues are therefore applicable to texts featuring *ekphrasis*, including *Images* and *In Defense of Images*.⁵⁶ In these texts, two interlocutors create the idealized likeness of the body and soul of an allegedly real woman by using words to assemble features of women from known statues and textual representations. Then, one interlocutor declaims and impersonates her for the other as though she herself was critiquing their product. Throughout these texts, however, the woman whom the characters stage is absent from the reader's gaze.⁵⁷

⁵³ Webb (2006a) 43–46, (2009) 18–28; Lada-Richards (2007) 96–97 examine the uneasy conflation of actor and role, with its historical implications. Connolly (2007) 26–27 discusses the productivity of oratory and the "lost" past that it inspires.

⁵⁴ Webb (2006a) 46. ⁵⁵ Lucian, *Pisc.* 31–33.

⁵⁶ Webb (2009) 127–28 frames *ekphrasis* as the imitation of perceptions of reality.

⁵⁷ See Goldhill (2001b) 90–93; Cistaro (2009) 55, 245–307; Webb (2006b) 116–17, 124, 129–32, (2009) 18–28, 37–38, 141–66, 175–77 (on *ekphrasis* and declamation generally), 87–103 (on *ekphrasis* as a simulation of the act of seeing, not the simulation of a real object).

Their image and impersonations displace the “real” absent woman. In similar ways, Lykinos’ claim in *On Dance* that a barbarian once observed that a dancer had one body but many souls reflects the slippage that exposed the imitation of models to be the production of their essential likeness.⁵⁸ Performers became or produced their models while generating the deception and plausible fiction of being “copies,” and the image that they projected ostensibly made present an “original” while concealing its absence or non-existence.⁵⁹ However much Lucian’s characters espoused a Platonic understanding of *mimēsis*, in which copies are (flawed) imitations of existing originals, their performances had the productive faculties of Derrida’s.⁶⁰ In other words, *mimēsis* was not necessarily the imitation of what existed but the production of a novelty amid the appearance that the novelty copied or recast an original paradigm.

This formulation coheres with those of Justin and Tatian, who argued that the Greeks’ and Romans’ flawed *mimēsis* of *Logos* or ancient barbarian models shaped their perceptions of legitimate Greekness in a Roman imperial context.⁶¹ As they “imitated” past philosophers and poets, who themselves had an imperfect vision of *Logos* or borrowed from barbarians, sophists deceptively generated classical models and “origins” through their performative acts. As Justin claimed, Plato’s ideals and morals imitated those of Moses, and when demons had influenced Greek poets to describe how Athena was born from Zeus’ head, they were mimicking the “barbarian” belief that the divine *Logos* (as rational thought) created the world. Myths regarding the birth of Zeus’ other children merely imitated “barbarian” discourses prophesying the Son of God.⁶² In this vein, contemporary sophists’ stabilization of ancient Greek philosophers and poets as origins for their flawed beliefs and behaviors disguised the “truth” of *Logos* and the “real” barbarian origins of Hellenism.

If the world of Lucian’s corpus constituted a productive theatrical spectacle in which origins, histories, and models were manufactured, it was a spectacle that none escaped. Viewers could situate themselves as unbiased

⁵⁸ Lucian, *Salt*. 66.

⁵⁹ Likewise, Elsner (1995) 67–70, 82–84 on “realist” art in Vitruvius and Pompeian houses and Elsner (1996) 529–30, (2007) 46–47 on the conflict among sophists and within Lucian’s corpus regarding whether images project the illusion of originals or become the originals.

⁶⁰ Derrida’s concept of the supplement, a putative copy that supplants and replaces its original, is relevant here. Yet, equally as important is Derrida’s reading of Mallarmé’s *Mimique*, in which a mime does not imitate an existing model but produces the idea and image of himself. The mime calls into signification the model that (s)he “imitates” and creates the mask that (s)he assumes; mimes perform, enact, and inscribe themselves. Derrida (1981) 92–93, 137, 206–7.

⁶¹ Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 5, 3–420–23, 46.359–64; *Apol. Min.* 13, esp. 13.5–6; Tatian, *Ad Gr.* 1.1–2, 40.1–2.

⁶² Specifically Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 54, 59, 64.

spectators located outside a spectacle and scrutinize the guises, characters, and mask of its performers, but their position was inherently unstable. The spectacle's actors could turn their gaze upon viewers and embed them in the spectacle as actors.⁶³ In various ways, Lucian even indicates that he or his narrators are anchored in this theatrical world as they criticize the performances of other "frauds." In *Alexander*, for instance, Lucian stages an Epicurean narrator performing a neutral critique of the false prophet Alexander, but then the narrator, identifying himself as "Lucian," inserts himself into the text as a character who bites Alexander's hand. While situating "Lucian" as an actor on the "stage" (*skēnē*) of the false Alexander's temple, he claims to have become a marvelous spectacle (*thauma*) to those who watched his sudden "transformation" (*metabolē*) from Alexander's enemy to his *philos*.⁶⁴ While critiquing a world of spectacle, Lucian's texts also signaled that they too were embedded in and sustaining its productive power. No one was exempt, not even Lucian.

On Dance too stresses the instability of viewing as spectators become invested and integrated into the spectacle that they watch. One possibility that *On Dance*'s Lykinos raises for viewing's effect is that spectators (*theatai*) could subjectively see themselves in a dancer as though a mirror. Because they see likenesses of their own souls, the sight (*thea*) makes them recognize the Delphic saying "know yourself" in ways that enable them to engage in moral self-improvement.⁶⁵ Lykinos' statements therefore describe how spectacles stimulated viewers to see their souls in the *schēma* or *prosōpon* of their principal actors and to engage in subjective self-sculpting.⁶⁶ A second effect that Lykinos envisions is, by contrast, a loss of subjectivity. He presents the risk that an audience, failing to maintain a vantage point external to the spectacle, would beneath the dancers' gaze share the virtues, vices, emotion, and madness of its performers in ways that destabilized neatly framed distinctions between subjects and others, between viewers and actors.⁶⁷ When this occurred, the distinction between "naturalistic" viewing of a mimetic representation and "ritual-centered" viewing, which embedded spectators in the social or cultic performance upon which they gazed, was compromised.⁶⁸ In the same way that Plato's *Ion* posits that audiences shared the enthusiasm of rhapsodists just as magnets attracted

⁶³ Such dynamics of viewing, theater, and spectacle are stressed by Bartsch (1994) 1–31; for mirrors, (2006) 18–28.

⁶⁴ Lucian, *Alexander* 19, 55. Branham (1989) 205–6 examines Lucian's appearance in his own text and his hypocritical bite.

⁶⁵ Lucian, *Salt*. 81. Lada-Richards (2005) 337–44.

⁶⁶ Elsner (2007) 166–68, 175–76 discusses viewers and narcissism. ⁶⁷ Lada-Richards (2007) 96–97.

⁶⁸ Elsner (2000) 61, (2001b) 141, (2007) 24 analyzes these forms of viewing.

a chain of iron rings, Lucian's narrators and characters often suggest that viewers could assume the dispositions of performers and emerge as actors of the spectacle.⁶⁹ In fact, after describing how a dancer went mad while performing Ajax, Lykinos claims that spectators shared and enacted his madness as he moved amid (*eis to meson*) them.⁷⁰ If the dancer had performed so that his audience could fulfill its voyeuristic desires and engage in self-reflection, his audience reciprocated by assuming the madness of the raving mad Ajax that he embodied.

Lucian's complex treatment of origins, models, spectacle, and viewing meshes with his treatment of historiography. Historiography too was a theatrical spectacle in which actors staged models or origins by assuming the unstable position of external viewers. In this vein, Lucian's works addressing the topic of historiography destabilize the truth-bearing validity of historical composition. While different from poetry and oratory in form, style, expectations, and often content, history too was a productive mode of performance, and the historian was no less an actor than a poet or an orator. This feature is prominent, for instance, in *True Histories*, in which the author of the history admits that he was creating fiction and, by doing so, parodying ancient poets, philosophers, and the tradition of historiography associated with Herodotus and Ctesias of Cnidus, who wrote fiction that merely appeared true.⁷¹ After this prologue, he stages the "false" narrator, who participates as a character in the fictive spectacle of *paradoxa* that he has intended to observe. Despite his dubious reliability and his integration into his spectacle, this wandering Odyssean character, who reveals himself to be "Lucian," claims to have visited the moon, where he flawlessly observed the world's people through a looking glass/mirror (*katoptron*).⁷²

Even *How to Write History*, which vaunts the empirically sound goals of historical composition, coheres with how Lucian's works often present historians as self-interested actors who create "origins" or "models" while claiming merely to imitate or represent them. Its anonymous narrator, addressing a certain Philo, argues consistently that the goal of historical composition is to report accurately what has happened and to describe events unembellished by praise.⁷³ This feat distinguishes admirable historians like Thucydides from poets, orators, or flawed historians, who seek to earn favor through exaggerated valorization. Yet, as the text ends, the

⁶⁹ Pl., *Ion* 533c–536d generally. ⁷⁰ Lucian, *Salt*. 83.

⁷¹ Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 1.2–4, 2.31. ⁷² Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 1.26.

⁷³ Lucian, *Hist. conscr.* 7–13, 38–63 in general. Georgiadou and Larmour (1994) 1450–70 analyze the text and its likely debt to Polybius' views on history.

narrator produces a spate of similes that destabilize his argument even as they appear to support it, and these similes suggest that effective history was characterized not so much by truth as verisimilitude, which ultimately distinguished historical composition from more “fictive” genres. As the narrator states, historians were to “resemble” the Zeus of Homer gazing upon the earth from above; their judgment was to be as precise as a *katoptron*; in their composition of history, they were to be like sculptors who fashioned but did not create their raw materials.⁷⁴

These themes, however, appear in other Lucianic texts in ways that undermine the detached and stable truth-bearing validity of spectators, whose positions emerge as unstable, humorous, flawed, and theatrical. First, the claim that historians should be like Zeus viewing the world from above coheres with the fantastic position of *Icaromenippus*’ Menippus, who views the “theater” of the earth from the moon and significantly cites Homer’s Zeus to describe his endeavors. Menippus then proceeds to visit Zeus, who has been conspicuously unaware of what is happening on earth, and persuades him to destroy sham or immoral philosophers. Afterwards, he returns to this “theater” to witness his rivals’ demise.⁷⁵ Second, despite participating as a character in the spectacle of *paradoxa* that he views and records, “Lucian,” the false narrator of the fictive *True Histories*, in similar ways asserts that he gazed neutrally at the world through a *katoptron* from the moon. Finally, as we have seen, Lucian depicts sculptors of divine likenesses as creating divinities through their signifying faculties, not as copying divine “models.”⁷⁶ Sculptors may not create the physical matter that they shaped, but they still created the likenesses that substituted for absent “originals.” All told, historical compositions that engaged in effective verisimilitude, much like those that proposed philosophical “knowledge” of the cosmic order, were nonetheless staged acts; they not only substituted a likeness or representation for an absent “model,” but their representation also generated or stabilized the model. Likewise, historians were not neutral spectators. They were among the spectacle’s actors, and their display of past or present truth, their claim to view a spectacle from the outside, was a performance and a strategic positioning. Even Thucydides, whom Lucian treats as an exemplary and precise historian, was not immune to such

⁷⁴ Lucian, *Hist. conscr.* 49–51.

⁷⁵ Lucian, *Icaromen.* 11, 15–33 (24 for Zeus’ ignorance). Kemezis (2010) 300. Both texts cite *Il.* 13.4. For links between *True Histories* and *How to Write History*, Georgiadou and Larmour (1994) 1478–1504; (1998a) 29–32. *True Histories* may have offered a parodic example of the false but deceptively plausible history critiqued by *How to Write History*, with *Bacchus* or *Heracles* constituting *prolaliai* of *True Histories* in ways that connected the two seemingly incongruous works.

⁷⁶ Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 1.26; *Sac.* 11, for instance.

critique.⁷⁷ He too was an actor, one who posed as an historian producing a work for posterity to treasure.

Accordingly, even if viewers or historians fashioned *schēmata* or *prosōpa* distinguishing them from a spectacle's actors, they only disguised the interchangeability and supplementary potential of "subject" and "other." For they too were actors, and beneath *prosōpa* that marked difference, their "souls" or underlying *schēmata* and *prosōpa* were marked by a spectacle's permeating madness or enthusiasm.⁷⁸ Amid such sameness, their "masks" or "characters" merely concealed the absence of real difference and marked fictive differences produced by performance. The significance of performance for the construction of difference that is experienced as "real" or, in other words, the concealment of sameness among actors and spectators has implications for the performance of historiography and especially ethnography. For in these compositions, actors pose as viewers observing foreign spectacles (*theamata*), marvels (*thaumata*), and *paradoxa* of otherness from external (if close) vantage points. In *On the Syrian Goddess*, the distance between ethnographic viewer and spectacle is unstable (Chapter 10). It exists only through *doxa*.

Lucian, theater, and the production of *doxa* in imperial Rome

The product of the spectacles and performances staged and enacted by contemporary sophists in Lucian's corpus, whether they declaimed, practiced philosophy, or wrote history, was *doxa*. Among the most notable *doxai* was the belief or appearance that "classical" Greek traditions were the legitimate and authoritative expressions of Greekness. In Lucian's works, *doxa* accordingly inhabits several intertwined definitions. At its most literal, obvious, and commonplace, *doxa* was the glory or reputation that philosophers, rhetors, or historians, and other *philodoxoi* accrued amid their "imitation" of the classical Greek past. Yet, this literal and commonplace definition, I would assert, is intimately connected to a more abstract, theoretical connotation: *doxa* as an appearance, verisimilitude, opinion, belief, or expectation that disguises or substitutes for what is real or true, or else disguises its non-existence. *Doxa* was in this sense the "glory" or "reputation" that actors earned when they produced "appearance" or "belief"

⁷⁷ Bartley (2003) discusses Lucian's approval of Thucydides in *True Histories* and, more implicitly, *How to Write History*. Greenwood (2006) 109–29 (esp. 116–17) examines how Lucian uses Thucydides to inscribe history as an "act" or "performance."

⁷⁸ The viewed object, by being "other," "constructs the viewer," as Elsner (1995) 39 comments on Philostratus. Lucian likewise suggests that viewed performers construct their viewers, but in their likeness (as performers).

by crafting *schēmata* and *prosōpa*, by creating material or written likenesses that people substituted for or treated as “real,” or by enacting models that they allegedly imitated. As actors became what they “seemed” and exposed others as merely “seeming” (but not being) what they performed, *doxa* was central to sophistic performance and its emulation of “classical” Greekness.

Lucian’s corpus repeatedly references *doxa* (or its counterpart *para-doxon*), its production, and how it substitutes for the real in ways that make it difficult, if possible at all, to distinguish appearance from real, “seeming” from “being.” A few select examples illustrate this point. At the beginning of *Teacher of Rhetors*, a fraud tells a student, “you ask, boy, how to become a rhetor and seem (*doxeis*) to be a sophist, that most venerable and universally honored name.”⁷⁹ As this text suggests, students sought false sophists to teach them to be false sophists who posed as real ones. To distinguish between a real sophist and an effective fraud was therefore a tenuous, if strategic, task, especially since Lucian’s truth-bearing critical narrators or comic heroes were, as noted above, performing the role of “true *pepaideumenos*” just like any other sophist. *Peregrinus* works in continuity with this premise, and its narrator records how the false philosopher Peregrinus incinerated himself at the Olympic games through his “desire for *doxa*” and “thirst for *doxa*.” Like the mythical shape-changer Proteus, “he became everything for *doxa* and underwent thousands of transformations,” including those of a Christian priest and a Cynic philosopher.⁸⁰ The link between *doxa* and performance is equally as explicit in *Fisherman*, in which Parrhesiades criticizes fraud philosophers who imitated and assumed the *prosōpeia* and *schēmata* of Chrysippus, Plato, and Pythagoras as actors motivated by *doxa*.⁸¹ *Doxa* was also produced by the performance of history, in which actors assumed the *schēmata* and *prosōpa* of impartial spectators. Lucian parodizes such positioning in *True Histories*’ prologue by claiming that the only truth that he as author had to say was that he was lying or producing fiction. He states that he had been driven by “vain *doxa*” (*kenodoxia*) to write fiction (*pseudos*) about an ethnographic venture, and then he inserts himself as narrator and character into his narrative and describes how “Lucian” participates in the “false” *paradoxa* that he observes.⁸² In *Apology*, the anonymous narrator embeds his own

⁷⁹ Lucian, *Rhetorum Praeceptor* 1.

⁸⁰ Lucian, *Peregr.* 1, 9–11: ἀπαντὰ γὰρ δόξης ἕνεκα γενόμενος καὶ μυρίας τροπὰς τραπόμενος. In other parts of Lucian’s corpus, Proteus is a mythical sea divinity (a character mask in himself) who can assume multiple characters, including fire and water. *Dial. Mar.* 4. Peregrinus’ status as “Proteus” references such transformative qualities.

⁸¹ Lucian, *Pisc.* 31–33. ⁸² Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 1.2–4.

production of *doxa* in a theatrical spectacle. While assuming the *prosōpon* of Sabinus, the text's putative audience, he criticizes himself for cultivating the life that he parodied in *On Salaried Positions*. He claims that "the more famous you seem (*dokeis*) to all, the more a mockery you will prove to seem (*an doxeias*) since your current life contradicts your book."⁸³ The narrator, seeming to be Sabinus, criticizes himself for seeming to be someone other than he had previously seemed.⁸⁴ Finally, in *Hermotimus*, the interlocutors, while noting that philosophers' claims to elevated knowledge constituted a *schēma* and *doxa* that they performed, discern that it is impossible to verify what philosophical truth is. If philosophers spoke this "truth," they would no longer "seem" (*doxousin*) superior but would appear like everyone else. In other words, truth was the recognition that *doxa* was not truth, not incontrovertible reality.⁸⁵

While Greeks produced *doxa* by performing in a world of spectacle, Roman power-holders built the material theater in which it was enacted.⁸⁶ Accordingly, in *On Salaried Positions*, Greek *pepaideumenoι*, who pursue *doxa*, are "displayed as part of the spectacle of Roman power."⁸⁷ As the work's principal interlocutor maintains, Rome transformed resident Greek intellectuals and philosophers into virtual slaves (*douloi*) as they became paid servants for Roman elites who pretended to value the merits of Homer, Demosthenes, and Plato but who really wanted to be seen possessing philosophers, grammarians, or rhetors wearing Greek *himatia*. They had become status symbols and signs of excess wealth for boorish Romans, and a Roman would "appear" (*doxei*) to be a lover of Greek learning by keeping Greeks who sported beards and cloaks to appear as philosophers.⁸⁸ In fact, *On Salaried Positions* presents the Roman house as a theater into whose corrupt interior Greek intellectuals progressively migrated by assuming the roles imposed upon them. The Roman house was thereby a microcosm for the Roman imperial order, with Rome at its center, and as Greeks participated in its *doxa*, they were enervated by the gazes of Roman power-holders who scrutinized and reduced them to material abjection.⁸⁹ Romans kept their Greeks for *doxa*, and while this *doxa* commoditized classical Greek

⁸³ Lucian, *Apol.* 4. ⁸⁴ Goldhill (2002) 69–71 fully develops this "self-reflexive" joke.

⁸⁵ Lucian, *Herm.* 64 and 75.

⁸⁶ Nasrallah (2005) 295–98 stresses the fakery of Athens and the corrupting force of Rome.

⁸⁷ Whitmarsh (2001a) 290.

⁸⁸ Lucian, *Merc. Cond.* 24–25. Similarly, *Nigr.* 4, 17–35. Whitmarsh (2001a) 265–93 explores how these texts depict the consolidation of authoritative hierarchies through false pretenses and how the spectacle and control of Greek cultural production express Roman power. Similarly, Johnson (2010) 170–75.

⁸⁹ As demonstrated by Whitmarsh (2001a) 180–90.

culture and could elevate sophists above other Greeks and “barbarians,” it also replicated Roman domination and mastery over Greeks.⁹⁰ Indeed, the material splendor, magnetic force, and disempowering gaze of Rome was the focal point against which Greek sophists were “interpellated” as subjects, even if they criticized its excesses, corruption, and domination of provincial territory.⁹¹

Justin Martyr and Tatian provide similar critiques of Greco-Roman *doxa*. Justin maintained that Greeks and Romans who denied the “truth” of the *Logos* and embraced the *doxa(i)* of ancient Greeks were mired in the deceptions that Roman imperial power and sophistic theatrics had produced.⁹² Justin’s *First Apology* accordingly reminded the emperor, its putative addressee, of his complicity in maintaining *doxa*’s illusion. As Justin noted, “magistrates who honor *doxa* over the truth (*alētheia*)” were like “brigands in a desert,” and he exhorted the emperor to follow a cultured, learned, and just line of inquiry instead of treating “Christians” as evil because of their name, not their works.⁹³ His *Second Apology*, which is addressed to Romans generally, stresses that Crescens, a rival philosopher and a proponent of Christian persecution, was (like Lucian’s Peregrinus) a *philodoxos*. In his pursuit of prestige, he was among the “liars” who conformed to and replicated widespread *doxa*, which constituted a cloak concealing Christian truth.⁹⁴ Amid such *doxa*, role-playing philosophers “became *endoxoi*” by replicating the false views of their predecessors and assuming their physical *schēma*.⁹⁵ Many sophists in fact, disdaining the true (*alēthēs*) *Logos*, believed that good and evil did not exist; *doxa* determined all such categories.⁹⁶

In short, as Justin claims, demons had driven philosophers, poets, and craftsmen to create a shroud of *doxa* hiding the truth of *Logos*, for the divine form (*eidos*) or *doxa* of *Logos* was “unspeakable” other than when it had taken the likeness of Christ or certain divinely inspired characters in the material realm. Christians accordingly imitated His goodness by embracing His *Logos* as spoken through Christ and other inspired scriptural figures.⁹⁷ By contrast, Greek sophists, philosophers, and priests whom Roman emperors admired fraudulently hid true *Logos* beneath two related forms of flawed mimicry. One was their production of images that

⁹⁰ Lucian, *Merc. Cond.* 19–23 and *passim*. ⁹¹ Althusser (1984) 44–51; Žižek (1989) 30–33.

⁹² For instance, Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 2.1; *Apol. Min.* 13.1. ⁹³ Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 12.6.

⁹⁴ Justin, *Apol. Min.* 8[3]1–6 (numbering from Minns’ and Parvis’ edition); 11.2, 13.1. For Romans and Greeks as *philodoxoi*, *Apol. Mai.* 53.12; 57.1, 3. For Lucian’s Peregrinus, Lucian, *Peregr.* 38.

⁹⁵ Justin, *Dial.* 1.2, 2.3. ⁹⁶ Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 28.4, 43.6.

⁹⁷ Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 5.3–4, 9 (9.3 for *doxa*), 10.1, 36, 46.2–3, 50.1–7; *Apol. Min.* 13.

they erroneously deemed copies of “real” gods. If the divine *Logos* had an unspeakable and unseen *doxa*, demons had persuaded imperial-era Greeks and their classical forerunners to erect likenesses (which were by implication artificial *doxai*) of divinities and endow them with rites and features borrowed from barbarian (i.e. Judeo-Christian) scripture. The other flawed mimicry was imperial-era Greeks’ emulation, whether superficial or rigorous, of classical Greek thinkers, whom they treated as sources of (Hellenic) wisdom, truth, and knowledge. Yet, such thinkers either had produced poor imitations of the divine or cosmic Truth that “barbarians” (Jewish prophets and Christians) had embraced, or they had adapted them from “barbarian” (Jewish) scripture. Greeks and Romans therefore enacted poor *mimēsis* of *Logos* in ways that produced *doxa*; Christians enacted a perfect one.⁹⁸

Likewise, Tatian staged himself as a critical observer exposing the *doxa* of contemporary Greek and Roman society. Following classical authors like Herodotus and Plato, who recognized how the Greeks had adopted barbarian traditions and knowledge, he argued that no original form of “Greek culture” existed; it always adopted and absorbed “barbarian” idioms and practices, only to recast them as elements of “Greek” culture.⁹⁹ In fact, “Greek” culture did not possess a single homogenous form upon whose contents all Greeks agreed. Its existence was in this sense *doxa*, and its varying dialects and manifestations prompted Tatian to claim that he was “at a loss as to whom I should call ‘Greek.’”¹⁰⁰ Tatian mocked philosophers “for needing so much training” merely to accept money from the Roman emperor and practice pederasty. Unlike Christian martyrs, glory-mongering philosophers staged their deaths not because of any knowledge of truth but through a “human madness for *doxa*” (*anthrōpinē doxomania*).¹⁰¹ Not fulfilling truly philosophical ideals, they behaved like Proteus and adopted the surface characteristics of philosophers, such as beards, leather pouches, and woven *himatia*, just so that they could attract patrons.¹⁰² Like Lucian, Tatian cast Greek sophists and philosophers as actors, as masters of fabrication who fashioned the classical forms and pasts that they claimed to “imitate.” The same logic applied to the statues and sculptures that Greeks produced as divine objects or representations of gods. By producing sculpture, they

⁹⁸ Justin, *Apol. Min.* 13, especially 13.5–6. Justin, *Apol. Mai.* 1–2, 2.3, 4.1, 5, 9–10, 12, 24–26, 29.4, 46, 54, 56, 59–64 generally.

⁹⁹ Tatian, *Ad Gr.* 1.1–4. Numbers follow the new edition of Trelenberg (2012).

¹⁰⁰ Tatian, *Ad Gr.* 1.4, with 26.8. Nasrallah (2005) 301–3 helpfully frames this issue.

¹⁰¹ Tatian, *Ad Gr.* 19.1–8 (3 quoted). For similar statements about Atticizing grammarians, their *doxa*, and *schēmata* 26.5–8.

¹⁰² Tatian, *Ad Gr.* 25.1–2.

crafted physical bodies and thereby identities for otherwise imperceptible, ethereal demons, and these demons, as Tatian stressed, aimed to usurp the status of gods and substitute for the true divine *Logos* among viewers by “implementing vain *doxa*” (*kenodoxein*).¹⁰³ He therefore refused to participate in the artifices of Greeks and Romans; he had been freed from madness for *doxa* (*doxomania*).¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

Lucian’s works, like those of Justin and Tatian, examined the *doxa* of the Roman world, its sophistic spectacles, and its classical definitions of Greekness, but with one critical difference. For Justin and Tatian, contemporary *doxa* concealed the (divine) truth from viewers; for Lucian, it concealed its incomprehensibility.¹⁰⁵ Despite this difference, these authors presented a Roman empire whose material basis produced a theater in which the physical properties of statues and temples and the performances of actors, who competed for Roman wealth and patronage, created an “appearance” of reality behind which only discerning viewers could peer. Lucian even classified his hybrid innovations as possessing *paradoxologia*, a word that activated *doxa*’s varied definitions. In this sense, his works defied “expectation” by combining seemingly incongruous genres and by presenting narratives of fantastic events and marvels (*paradoxa*) characteristic of “paradoxography” as if they were “expected” or “normal.”¹⁰⁶ But they also constituted *logoi* that staged past and present Greeks and barbarians in such unconventional or “paradoxical” ways that they contradicted standard conventions sustained by “appearance,” verisimilitude, belief, or expectation. After all, humorous representations of Homer as a Babylonian captive or a Bactrian camel prompted critical reflection of other depictions of Homer as an historical author. It could even be argued that by staging fantastic, exceptional, or “unreal” *paradoxa* or prompting readers to confront them, Lucian’s works stimulated reflection on *doxa*, on what by contrast “seemed” normal, true, or historical.

While “worthy of the theater,” Lucian’s texts thereby examined the *doxa* of genre, of origins, of history, of culture, and of identity categories.¹⁰⁷ They

¹⁰³ Tatian, *Ad Gr.* 12.6. In 15.5–10, Tatian denies that demons have fleshly bodies.

¹⁰⁴ Tatian, *Ad Gr.* 11.1.

¹⁰⁵ As Berdozzo (2011) 286–88 asserts regarding Lucian’s views on the divine.

¹⁰⁶ Lucian, *Zeux.* 1. Georgiadou and Larmour (1994) 1494–99 examine how *True Histories* makes *paradoxa* and the unbelievable appear familiar and typical; (1998a) 33–39 discuss Lucian’s engagement with “paradoxography.”

¹⁰⁷ Lucian, *Zeux.* 1, 12.

critiqued the performance of a sophistic Greek culture and the centrality of its classical forms, as stabilized and staged by Roman power, economy, and materialism. In fact, scholars have noted that Lucian's narrators and central characters, while often assuming the disposition of Cynics, provide a universalizing "metaphilosophical" examination of contemporary sectarian philosophical schools. They can also accredit him with conducting a "metadoxical" examination of the empire's *doxai* and its production of accumulated imperial "knowledge."¹⁰⁸ We now evaluate *On the Syrian Goddess* within this world of *doxa*, theatrical performance, and hybrid genre.

¹⁰⁸ König and Whitmarsh (2007) 14.

Syria writes back
Lucian's On the Syrian Goddess

Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess* is a complicated text. What it represents is more complicated still. The cult of the Syrian goddess in Lucian's lifetime did not consist simply of Greek and Near Eastern elements. Instead, a dynamic context of cultural interaction and transformation shaped its iconography, texts, and rituals. These included encounters between Greeks and local populations, the transmission of practices among various Near Eastern peoples, internal transformations, and, significantly, Syrians' adaptation of Greek representations. Such complex factors informed the similarities that Cybele and the Syrian goddess shared, and even perhaps sacred eunuchism.¹ *On the Syrian Goddess* offers tantalizing information on the goddess' temple at Hierapolis in Syria. As this chapter stresses, many cultural processes that it outlines have significant parallels in Syria's material record elsewhere.

Despite this, problems with the text's treatment of Hierapolis emerge. First, its narrator, who writes in Herodotus' (pseudo)-Ionic dialect, poses as a practitioner of what the Lucianic corpus elsewhere treats as dubious Herodotean ethnography and autopsy. Lucian's narrator thereby summons the reader to question his narrative's reliability. Second, too little is known about Hierapolis to verify the text's accuracy. Coins minted by late fourth-century (BCE) dynasts, municipal issues from Antiochus IV's reign and the Roman imperial period, and a late Hellenistic relief affirm the settlement's original name of "Manbog," its link to Atargatis and Hadad, and its adoption of the title *Hierapolis*. They also document Atargatis' eventual identity as "the Syrian Goddess," her and Zeus/Hadad's shifting iconography, the presence of the "divine standard (*sēmeion*)," and continuities in priests' Near Eastern attire. *Manbogaioi* and its variants were in fact popular personal names, especially near Emesa and Damascus.² In addition, classical

¹ See Lightfoot (2003) 1–87. Also Lightfoot (2002); (2005) 348–50.

² Ronzevalle (1940): Seyrig (1971); *SC* 2.1432–33; Stucky (1976); Lightfoot (2003) 38–44, 540–47. Sartre (2007) 227 lists *Manbogaioi*' attestations.

sources and papyrus documents often referred to the city as Bambyce, and inscriptions showing that the Roman-era city sponsored Greek games and a civic council indicate that Hierapolis' citizen body was recognized as legitimately Greek within Syria's peer polity network.³ A Jewish rabbi later reportedly situated Hierapolis' sanctuary among the Near East's five most significant pagan temples.⁴ Otherwise, information on Hierapolis is from *On the Syrian Goddess*.

For present purposes, however, the accuracy of the text's treatment of Hierapolis specifically is not the point. What is significant is how the text disrupts stable distinctions between representations and the material world that they represent. One feature of the dynamic social context that the text describes is how (As)Syrians integrated Greek representations of them into their actual practices and their narratives of their temple's "Assyrian" past. Even if little is known about Hierapolis, this process, as Lucian's narrator describes it, coheres in principle with what is known of other contemporary Syrian contexts. This is significant. As the introduction and chapter 3 note, many scholars posit that authentic "indigenous" social affiliations must be expressed through Near Eastern idioms and historical memories. Lucian's text challenges this principle. It indicates how ethnic and indigenous categories shift and how (As)Syrians recreated Syrian culture by integrating and reconstituting Greek representations and symbols. Yet, Lucian introduces further complexity when his narrator simultaneously assumes the cultural positioning of a Greek ethnographer creating a questionable Herodotean representation of Hierapolis' cult and an (As)Syrian who "indigenizes" this Greek representation by incorporating it into the (As)Syrians' cultural framework. Even if Herodotus and his ethnographic offspring were "liars," the (As)Syrians, including the narrator, transformed their distorting (mis)representations into Syrian practices, history, and culture. In other words, even if the text's accuracy regarding Hierapolis cannot be verified, its enacting of how Syrians expressed Syrianness through Greek idioms and Greek representations of varied reliability have parallels elsewhere in Syria.

While eliciting such complexities, the text also marks the shiftiness of cultural positioning and the incoherence of binary cultural categories. It stresses the difficulty of translating one society's practices for another, but it also destabilizes distinctions between Greek spectators and observed (As)Syrians and the ability of Greeks to maintain cultural binaries through

³ Wilcken (1927) 121; *IGLS* 1.233; *IGR* 3.1012=*IGLS* 4.1265.

⁴ Bab. Talmud, *Avod. Zar.* 11b.

Herodotean ethnographic measures.⁵ This is in part because the text, like many of Lucian's works, frames a theatrical context in which performers staged subject and other through the fabrication of masks or faces concealing the lack of essential difference.⁶ As this chapter posits, the narrator acts as an anonymous spectator (*theatēs*) describing a foreign *theama* and its *thaumata* (ps.-Ionic *thōumata*). While identifying himself as Assyrian, the anonymous narrator imitates Herodotus' Ionic dialect and historiographic approach and thereby positions himself as an Herodotean observer and a Greek *pepaideumenos* conversant in classical dialects (even if not Attic) and historical composition. In other words, the narrator, like Dio in his *First Tarsian Oration*, acts as a Greek sophist viewing a barbarian spectacle. Despite this, his presentation of the spectacle, as illustrated by his frequent recourse to the impersonal verb *doke(e)i* ("it seems") so typical of Herodotus, is mediated by the appearances, opinions, and "seeming" generated by performance.⁷ In this sense, Lucian's narrator acts in the same context of theater and assumed masks typifying his other depictions of Roman imperial Greeks. His performance as Herodotean viewer and Greek *pepaideumenos* is just that: a performance. And as he describes foreign *thaumata/thōumata* (and by implication *paradoxa*), he stimulates reflection on *doxa*.

In this vein, while its narrator indicates that discrepant modes of viewing produced cultural difference, as exemplified by how differently Greeks and Syrians visualized deities, *On the Syrian Goddess* also positions viewers in ways that undermine stable cultural differentiation. Instead of maintaining the binary of Greek spectator and foreign spectacle, it inscribes these seemingly contradictory cultural positions onto the narrator, who emerges as an actor playing simultaneously the role of a Greek viewer and a pilgrim embedded in an (As)Syrian spectacle. Even more, as this chapter suggests, the text and especially its oral performance draw its learned Greek readers, auditors, and above all performers to view Hierapolis through the unstable face(s) of the narrator.⁸ As it does so, they assume the narrator's disposition(s) and too become actors engaging in shifting performances of

⁵ Baragwanath (2008) shows how Herodotus endows Greeks and barbarians with complex psychologies and resists simple dichotomies, but his text inscribes difference between Greeks (on whose behalf he views) and barbarians that he observes.

⁶ Whitmarsh (2001a) 254–57, 267–79.

⁷ Lucian, *D. Syr.* 1, 4, 7–11, 14, 16–17, 20, 29, 25, 51. The verb *eidon* (I saw) is repeated often. Note that *dokei* also typifies the "false" ethnographer of *Ver. Hist.* 1.22, 24, 31, 40, 42 and Menippus who visits Hades via Babylonia and compares dead shades to actors on a stage (*Necy.* 16). Lightfoot (2003) 166–70 notes how such terms frame the narrator as cultivating "unargued belief" in marvels and appearances (170).

⁸ Elsner (2001b) 143–44, whose observations I expand.

Greek viewer and Syrian pilgrim in ways that illuminate the production, contradictions, instability, and entanglement of dichotomous cultural categories. The binary of Greek subject and Syrian spectacle thereby registers as a *doxa* staged by performance, and beneath appearances of difference, all are the same. Everyone is an actor in a spectacle that generates the *doxa* of difference, including Greek viewers. In this sense, *On the Syrian Goddess* interrogates how imperial contexts fostered modes of performing and viewing that produced binary cultural distinctions. Like Lucian's other texts, it offers a "metadoxical" examination of *doxa*.

Despite continuities, *On the Syrian Goddess* differs significantly from other works of Lucian treating (As)Syrians and their marginality. In such works, his Syrian narrators or common heroes tell their scrutinizing critics that they became Greeks through their cultivation of Greek *paideia*.⁹ In *Fisherman*, Parrhesiades stresses that he is Greek despite being a Syrian from the Euphrates; other "barbarians" had likewise become Greeks by practicing their *paideia*. In *Double Indictment*, the personification of Greek rhetoric describes how she transformed an anonymous "Syrian," who initially had a "barbarian voice" and wore the tunic of "Assyrians," into a fellow citizen.¹⁰ Finally, *Scythian* narrates how the Athenian sage Solon educated Scythians in Greek ways before stating that Syrians, being no meaner than Scythians, could aspire to the same.¹¹

Lucian's corpus also embeds such accomplishments as Greeks in a spectacle pitting Syrian against Syrian. The Syrian narrators of Lucian's *False Critic* and *Against the Ignorant Book Collector*, for instance, pose as "real" Greek *pepaideumenoí* who rigorously master and live Greek *paideia*. They also frame certain Syro-Phoenician rivals as mimics who faked acculturation and classical Greek learning, just as the speaker of *Teacher of Rhetors* advocates. One target, for instance, allegedly cannot perform improvised declamation and misconstrues classical etymologies; the other collects classical texts only for display.¹² In ways reminiscent of Dio's *First Tarsian Oration* and perhaps parodizing how sophists mapped distinctions between "real" Greeks and posers, the narrators of these texts inhabit the unstable position of *paideia*'s true practitioners by "exposing" Syrians merely to be feigning Greek classical knowledge. Intriguingly, in *False Critic*, the Syrian narrator further claims that the fraudulent sophist, a Syro-Phoenician of Tyre, performed acts of oral sex that qualified as "abominable services"

⁹ Gangloff (2007); Visa-Ondarçuhu (2008). ¹⁰ Lucian, *Pisc.* 19; *Bis Acc.* 27.

¹¹ Lucian, *Scyth.* 9; Richter (2011) 160–76 treats Scythians in Lucian's works and Antonine literature.

¹² Johnson (2010) 158–70; Richter (2011) 147–52 provide thoughtful analysis of how the text establishes insiders (us) and outsiders (them).

(*hypourgiai kataptystoi*). These undermined his claim of being a moderate Greek *pepaideumenos*.¹³ The narrator of *Against the Ignorant Book Collector* similarly ends his invective by threatening to reveal his Syrian rival's abominable deeds (*kataptysta*).¹⁴ In both works, the Syrian narrators thereby accuse their rivals of characteristically Syrian sexual deviance despite their own vulnerability to similar arbitrary claims from competing sophists.

In such ways, Lucian's works depict how the unstable Greekness of Syrians endured constant scrutiny and vulnerability to accusations informed by Syrian stereotypes. But Lucian's Syrians still could stake claims as true Greek *pepaideumenoí*, police the boundaries of Greekness, and expose counterfeits, especially sexual deviants from their homeland. His texts thereby premise that Roman imperial "barbarians" could navigate diverse cultural identifications and "become" Greek through acculturation. Intriguingly, they also inverted Greek ethnographic expectations by subjecting Greek culture to the gaze of itinerant barbarians. Yet, all these texts maintained Greek and Syrian to be dichotomous cultural categories. *On the Syrian Goddess* challenges this binary. It renders boundaries between "Greek" and "barbarian" categories incoherent, and it maps how Syrian culture integrated Greek idioms and intersected with Greek culture.

Ethnography, theatricality, and cultural identification in *On the Syrian Goddess*

Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess* presents cultural categories as disputed questions, not facts. As recent scholarship has shown, it highlights and ironizes how Greek representations of foreigners produced differences between Greeks and barbarians. Such differences were anchored in Herodotean ethnographic tradition and replicated by contemporary sophists who, with Rome's support, sought to emulate the classical past. In fact, by imitating Herodotus' language, the text's narrator positions himself as a cultured Greek sophist whose mimicry of an ancient Greek dialect (even if not Attic) and a classical Greek historian marks him as *pepaideumenos*. He also establishes himself as such a cultured viewer (*pepaideumenos*) by producing an extended *ekphrasis* of Hierapolis.¹⁵ As *On the Syrian Goddess* progresses, however, the Greek spectator central to Herodotean

¹³ Lucian, *Pseudol.* 5–9, 19; 24–29, *passim*: botched declamation, misconstrued etymology, Syrian origins, and oral sex ("abominable deeds": 25).

¹⁴ Lucian, *Adv. Ind.* 3, 30: Syro-Phoenician origins and "abominable deeds".

¹⁵ Elsner (2011) stresses (religious) *ekphrasis*.

ethnographic history and sophistic *ekphrasis* emerges as an actor occupying strategic positions in the spectacle that he observes. This effect is amplified by how the narrator frames himself also as an (As)Syrian pilgrim who visits, views, and describes his homeland's sacred spaces.¹⁶ The categories of "Greek" and "(As)Syrian" are thereby presented as masks that actors fabricated, assumed, and exchanged. Just as Lucian never used his own name as a "straightforward act of self-identification," in this particular text, Greekness and Syrianness are "mutually implicative – and ironized – problems . . . Lucian's first-person story of his religious life oscillates and agitates between different cultural positions, different intellectual masks."¹⁷

In this vein, *On the Syrian Goddess* begins with anonymity couched in a complex cultural split. Directly after introducing the Assyrian Hera's cult at Hierapolis as the topic, the narrator assumes the referential position of an "Assyrian" without divulging his name. Despite his Assyrianness, his rhetorical position, as described above, is that of a Greek *pepaideumenos* situated in the Herodotean historical tradition.¹⁸ According to him, "I write as an Assyrian (*Assyrios*), and of the things that I describe, some I learned firsthand, and others, whatever I recount (*historeō*) that is older than me, I learned from the priests."¹⁹ This statement introduces numerous complexities to this text. First, by describing himself as an Assyrian, the narrator uses the archaizing terminology of Herodotean ethnography and contemporary sophists who adopted its usage. Because they emulated a past preceding Alexander's conquests, Greek sophists often described Syrians as "Assyrians" and treated Syria as untouched or imperfectly imbued by Hellenism. Lucian's narrator assumes this usage and its implications, but he also reduces the distance between a Syrian present under the Romans, whom he never mentions, and Syria's pre-Hellenistic "Assyrian" past. Even if Roman imperialism had framed Syrians as geographically and socially distinct from Assyrians, Lucian's narrator nonetheless uses Greek idioms to situate Syrians in relation to an "Assyrian" past and identification.

Second, while using the (pseudo)-Ionic dialect, the narrator's statement mimicked Herodotus' frequent claim that he had acquired information through his autopsy of foreign societies or by consulting priestly

¹⁶ Elsner (2001b) 126–28 provides treatment of the text's engagement with Herodotus and his ethnographic autopsy.

¹⁷ Goldhill (2002) 63, 81.

¹⁸ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 1 calls Hierapolis "sacred to Assyrian Hera" (ἱερὴ τῆς Ἡρῆς τῆς Ἀσσυρίνης). I use the critical edition of Lightfoot (2003).

¹⁹ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 1.

authorities.²⁰ In this case, however, Lucian's narrator suggests that he exceeds Herodotus' authority; he has not only visited (As)Syria and consulted its priests, but he also originates from the regional society that he describes. By framing himself as a (As)Syrian through Herodotean rhetoric, the narrator poses as a Syrian role-playing as a truth-bearing Greek ethnographer who describes the spectacle of a foreign "other," which he happens to be.²¹ In such ways, the narrator remains anonymous even as he fulfills many "different levels of authorial subjectivity." But as he navigates the ambiguous space between the poles of "Greek" and "(As)Syrian," he also renders incoherent the boundaries that mark them as antagonistic binaries.²² These categories intersect and share Greek idioms as the text progresses.

Herodotus' reputation as a liar enlivens this complexity. The narrator's imitation of Herodotus suggests that his extended *ekphrasis* of Hierapolis could be producing an image that misrepresents, displaces, or substitutes for the "real" city. In this sense, even as the narrator's *ekphrasis* guides its audience in viewing Hierapolis, it also occludes it.²³ Lucian's texts frequently invoke Herodotus' dubious reliability. He places him among the false historians whom he, while producing fiction that appeared true, explicitly parodies in *True Histories*, and he dismisses his veracity in *How to Write History* and *Lovers of Lies*.²⁴ Even the Herodotean tactic of citing inscriptions and monuments to verify his presence in a foreign place receives similar humorous treatment in *True Histories* and *On the Syrian Goddess*.²⁵ Anyone who doubted that the narrator "Lucian" visited the Isles of the Blessed could consult the inscription that the shade of Homer had erected to honor him.²⁶ Likewise, people could verify the statements of *On the Syrian Goddess*' anonymous narrator or even learn his actual name by consulting the casket that he dedicated at Hierapolis.²⁷ But until then they could only know their narrator's written likeness, not its absent "model."²⁸

Indeed, by parodying the "fictive" tradition of Greek ethnography, the narrator signals that he is assuming the masks of a Herodotean spectator

²⁰ Whether the narrator engages the *Assyrioi logoi* that Herodotus promises to write (in addition to *Histories*) is unclear. Hdt. 1.184.

²¹ As Elsner (2001b) 128; Goldhill (2002) 79 emphasize. Lightfoot (2003) 161–184 discusses in detail the narrator's Herodotean character, which at times deviates from Herodotus' conventions.

²² Elsner (2001b) 149. ²³ On such effects of *ekphrasis*, see Elsner (2007) 68.

²⁴ Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 1.1–4, 2.31; *Hist. conscr.* 42; *Philops.* 2, in which liars claim to learn exotic peoples' magical secrets. Saïd (1994) 153–63 explores the significance of Herodotus in Lucian's parody of ethnography in *Syr. D.* and other treatises. Also, Elsner (2001b) 126–28.

²⁵ Hdt. 2.44, 99, 103, for instance. ²⁶ Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 2.28. ²⁷ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 60.

²⁸ Lucian, *Hist. Ver.* 1.26 challenges readers in this way.

and of an inhabitant of the wondrous Syrian spectacle (*theamalthauma*) upon which he gazes.²⁹ Like Herodotus, he stages a dramatic performance of creative *doxa* amid his narration of Hierapolis' *thaumata* (and by implication *paradoxa*), but with one key difference. Whereas Greeks like Dio had signified subjecthood by staging and writing about barbarian "others" who posed as Greek, Lucian's narrator stages himself as a single body constituted by this Greek subject and its barbarian other, as viewer and spectacle. By oscillating between his (As)Syrian referential position and his rhetorical position as Herodotean Greek viewer, Lucian's narrator entangles the binary categories of "Greek" and "(As)Syrian." He deprives both of essential validity and transforms them into interchangeable masks that he as actor assumes. And as his text progresses, he even occludes the boundary between these dichotomous categories and occupies their amorphous points of intersection. Playing a Syrian disguised as a Greek and a Greek disguised as a Syrian, Lucian's narrator frames ethnography as a drama of humorous *paradoxa*, stimulates reflection on its *doxa*, and strips its cultural binaries of difference.

Ethnography, Hierapolis, and the "Assyrianizing" process

Lucian's treatment of ethnographic practice as a theatrical endeavor with humorously deceptive elements has significant implications for the narrator's relationship to (As)Syrian Hierapolis, a homeland that housed a piece of himself in the form of his hair.³⁰ According to Lucian's narrator, the temple at Hierapolis inhabited the ambiguous threshold of Greek and (As)Syrian societies. As such, it exerted a "centripetal" force, thereby attracting Syrians and "Arabs" to a cult center where they received a tattoo that all "Assyrians" shared. It also had a "centrifugal" effect; it led Greek viewers from classical topographies to the eastern Roman empire's margins.³¹ The narrator's constantly shifting positions between his referenced (As)Syrian mask and his Greek rhetorical position cohere with such ambiguity. His account of the temples at Sidon, Byblus, and Hierapolis and their origin myths imitate modes of historical inquiry and representation that Herodotus had employed, but it is ambiguous whether the narrator has visited them as an (As)Syrian pilgrim or Greek ethnographer.³² He

²⁹ The narrator's Herodotean position in *Syr. D.*, I suggest, is similar to that of *Hist. Ver.* 1.1–4, in which the narrator admits that he is producing fiction about the foreign spectacle, much like previous Greek ethnographers.

³⁰ Nasrallah (2005) 315–16.

³¹ Lightfoot (2005) 351–52 analyzes these "centripetal" and "centrifugal" properties.

³² Lucian, *Syr. D.* 2–28.

calls himself an Assyrian, but he reinforces his status as Greek *pepaideumenos* through his knowledge of Greek historiographical convention, Greek literature, and an archaizing Greek dialect.³³ He “translates” (As)Syrian practices into idioms accessible to Greeks, but while doing so, he indexes the discontinuities and misrecognitions that cultural translation raises. Through such tactics, Lucian’s narrator mercurially dons an (As)Syrian face gazing upon a cult center and a Greek mask observing civilization’s margins.

Yet, the text features even more complexities than these. The narrator also navigates how Roman imperial Greek representations of the Near East had transformed (As)Syrian culture in ways that obfuscated stable distinctions between these representations and the material world that they depicted. In fact, while communicating (As)Syrian practices through Greek conventions, the narrator also presents (As)Syrians as having “indigenized” Greek idioms and Greek representations of Assyrian, Lydian, or otherwise Near Eastern societies.³⁴ In this way, they constantly recreated (As)Syrian culture and history. The narrator accordingly begins by noting that Hierapolis, sacred to Assyrian Hera, only assumed its Greek name *hi(e)rē* (sacred) in more recent times, after its rites (*hi(e)ra*) had become famous.³⁵ Then, after indicating that (As)Syrian temples followed and even surpassed Egyptian and Phoenician precedents, he frames (As)Syrian cult as in part an indigenization of Greek myths, practices, and representations of various Near Eastern ethnicities or customs.³⁶ The foundation of the original temple, which the current one supplanted, exemplifies this feature.

When he introduces the original temple’s foundation, the narrator implicitly posits that the accounts (*logoī*) for it are mainly those of Greeks. He first notes that the *logoī* are sacred (*hiroi*), evident (*emphanees*), or mythical (*mythōdees*), and he then states that “the rest are barbarian (*alloi barbaroi*), and some agree with the Greeks.” These four categories cohere with the four narratives that he then tells: those of Deucalion (evident), Semiramis (mythical), Attes (sacred), and Dionysus (barbarian, but agreeing with that of Greeks).³⁷ The narrator thereby indicates that most myths for the temple’s foundation are Greek accounts or barbarian ones related to

³³ Lightfoot (2003) 179–84; (2005) 333–34 analyzes the narrator’s position “inside and outside his subject.”

³⁴ Sahlins (2000) 493–95, generally 414–526 examines how indigenous groups can “indigenize” modern imperial or global forces and recreate their local cultures.

³⁵ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 1. Richter (2011) 235–36 provides insightful observations.

³⁶ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 2–10 for temple building and precedents.

³⁷ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 11. Lightfoot (2003) 334. The Attis account is labeled a *logos hiros* (15) and inspires sacred eunuchism; the narrator doubts the Semiramis account (14); a visible chasm supports the Deucalion account (13); the narrator claims that the Dionysus account agrees with that of Greeks (16).

them. But the narrator also significantly stresses at his text's beginning that he had received all such accounts from (As)Syrian priests, whom he had consulted regarding Hierapolis' remote past.³⁸ They now therefore constituted (As)Syrian narratives or adaptations of Greek accounts. According to him, most claimed that Deucalion founded the temple for Hera, but others that Semiramis "the Babylonian" established it for her mother Derketo. A "wise man" posited that Attis built it for Rhea; (As)Syrians therefore modeled Hera's statue on Lydian likenesses of Rhea. A final perspective, as previously noted, was that Dionysus founded it for Hera. Remarkably, each account and its origins, despite the narrator's misleading labeling, cannot be framed singularly as "Greek," "(As)Syrian," or "barbarian." For instance, when Lucian's narrator claims to present the myth of Deucalion that Greeks tell, his "Greek" narrative of how Deucalion survived a cataclysmic flood is derived from a Near Eastern myth. But then the narrator shows how (As)Syrians had adapted and expanded this standard "Greek" myth of Deucalion to explain how he built the temple over a chasm that had drained the floodwater and still existed. Likewise, the narrator indicates that he finds the "barbarian" account of Dionysus as the temple's founder, which "agrees in many ways with the Greeks," to be most authentic.³⁹ He therefore trusts an account that he defines as barbarian but has learned from (As)Syrians who had adapted Greek myths of Dionysus' travels to Ethiopia/India. The "barbarian" account thus harmonized with Greek ones.

Such complexities illustrate the "misinterpretation and misrepresentation that run through every level of the text," and they highlight the incongruities and "tensions of naming and identity" that it features.⁴⁰ Lucian's narrator introduces the danger that the different narratives of Greeks and (As)Syrians, being so similar, could easily be misnamed and misrepresented as those of their cultural opposites. But such (mis)representation and (mis)naming in the temple's accounts of its origin also underline the instability, mutability, and entanglement of Greek and (As)Syrian cultural traditions. While the narrator follows the Herodotean method of presenting different explanations for ancient phenomena, he also indicates that (As)Syrians had adopted and adapted (or put another way, misnamed and misrepresented) Greek representations of Near Eastern peoples to

³⁸ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 1, 11. The "wise man" who relates Attis' myth is thereby (As)Syrian.

³⁹ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 11–16. Lightfoot (2003) 173–74 investigates how the *Hierapolitai* use Greek myth. For the Deucalion myth as the Assyrians' domestication of a Greek interpretation of a Near Eastern myth, Richter (2011) 237.

⁴⁰ As Richter (2011) 239, 242 aptly states.

produce mytho-historical narratives of their temple and cult. Their belief that Deucalion, Attis, or Dionysus had established the temple for Hera or Rhea indicates how (As)Syrian worshippers could interweave Greek myths, idioms, and (mis)representations of Near Eastern “barbarians,” whether Assyrian, Lydian, Phrygian or otherwise, to recreate “Assyrian” pasts. Even the account of Semiramis’ foundation for Derketo reflects a Greek representation of (As)Syrian history that (As)Syrians integrated into their temple’s aetiology.⁴¹ In fact, the narrator claims that many cultic items and practices at the temple constitute material traces of these myths. Rites of sacred eunuchism were inspired by Greek representations of myths that Lydians told about Attis’ self-emasculation through his devotion to Rhea, and Dionysus had allegedly raised massive stone *phalloi* and a self-identifying inscription still present at Hierapolis’ temple. As (As)Syrians reframed their transforming cultural system through Greek idioms, this process generated innovative, if diverse, narratives of an “Assyrian” past, and it complicated and disrupted the categorical coherence of the “Greek” and “(As)Syrian” binary.

The narrator’s description of the present temple’s construction features similar complexities. According to him, Stratonice, queen of Assyria, had the temple built to expiate an offense against Assyrian Hera. When the Assyrian king (Seleucus) sent his friend Kombabos to administer the construction, Kombabos emasculated himself and placed his privates in a small chest so that he could thwart Stratonice’s sexual advances.⁴² As the narrator relates, Kombabos had shown the proper foresight despite the enormity of his self-mutilation. The queen attempted to initiate intercourse with him, and when she failed, she and Kombabos’ enemies accused him of trying to seduce her. Summoned by the king, he returned to the royal court, where he had the king open the chest and discover his sexual organs. Kombabos then returned to Hierapolis, finished the temple, and eventually donned women’s clothing. According to the narrator, Kombabos’ travails inspired Hierapolis’ rites of sacred eunuchism and explained why eunuchs there wore women’s clothing, although a statue also depicted him as a woman dressed like a man.⁴³

While disrupting the integrity of gender categories, the narrator’s presentation of Kombabos’ ordeal also depicts the inhabitants of Hierapolis as “indigenizing” or “Assyrianizing” Greek representations of (As)Syrians. For one, his account treats the Greek Seleucid dynasts simply as “kings of

⁴¹ Lightfoot (2003) 351–55. Lucian appears to have derived his description of Semiramis from the works of Ctesias of Cnidus and Eratosthenes.

⁴² Lucian, *Syr. D.* 16–27. ⁴³ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 26–27.

Assyria," in continuity with Semiramis and Sardanapalus, whose statues were located at the temple.⁴⁴ Likewise, this myth concerning Kombabos' interaction with his Seleucid patrons, even if being a Herodotean-style gloss on an "Oriental" story, constitutes a Greek representation of (As)Syrians that the (As)Syrians of Hierapolis have assumed and incorporated into their aetiological narratives for their cult.⁴⁵ In this way, the text complicates the production of cultural categories and the relationship between representations and their material models. It is therefore worth emphasizing that Lucian's narrator uses Greek *idioms* to *represent* (As)Syrians as using Greek *idioms* and *representations* to (re)produce (As)Syrian culture, history, and religion. Just as important is that the text embodies this very process of adaptation, (mis)representation, (mis)labeling, and recreation. A Greek ethnographer producing a narrative of Hierapolis in effect doubles as a Syrian pilgrim who "Assyrianizes" Greek representations of Hierapolis. Whether the text features a Greek (mis)representation or its Assyrianization is always ambiguous. In such ways, the text's fundamental uncertainty "spreads to you as a reader and threatens to disrupt your cultural map."⁴⁶ It also obfuscates stable boundaries between the binary categories of Greek and (As)Syrian, thereby rendering them as intersecting, entangled principles with shared idioms.

Accordingly, while *On the Syrian Goddess* provides a Herodotean representation of Hierapolis in ways that may distort, alter, or manipulate its myths and practices, it also constitutes for its reading audience the most recent (As)Syrian indigenization of such ethnographic perspectives. The (As)Syrians had thereby domesticated Greek idioms, narratives, and even Herodotean "lies" in ways that complicated the stability of "Greek" and "(As)Syrian" as binary categories. Despite this, the narrator still maintains that (As)Syrians staged ethno-cultural difference. In fact, the narrator posits that even as Assyrian religion integrated Greek idioms, it contained certain core elements that ensured an "Assyrian" framing for Greek and (As)Syrian viewers. This process shows remarkable continuity with how Syrian communities produced myths and material culture amid Greek and Roman imperialism. For instance, the narrator's presentation of the current temple's layout coheres with regional trends that archaeologists ascribe to contemporary temples in Syria. The *naoi* of such temples contained chapels in which cult reliefs were situated, even as their exteriors bore Greek or Roman ornamental features, and the boundaries of their

⁴⁴ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 39–40.

⁴⁵ Lightfoot (2003) 180–81, 384–86, 394–400 provides detailed analysis.

⁴⁶ Goldhill (2002) 80.

sanctuaries were often defined by *propyla* and walls. Likewise, the temple's images of Zeus and Hera enthroned on bulls and lions, the cult "standard" or "sign" that stood between them, and the *phalloi* that adorned the sanctuary are paralleled by archaeological finds from other Syrian or Mesopotamian settlements, such as Dura-Europos, Palmyra, and Hatra.⁴⁷ Finally, as already emphasized, many Roman imperial Syrian communities used Greek as their language of "Syrian" expression and adapted or "indigenized" Greek myths to produce their local or regional histories.⁴⁸ Syrians and other residents of the Near East, for instance, could claim Dionysus as "founder."⁴⁹

Accordingly, the text's accuracy regarding Hierapolis, itself unverifiable, is not strictly relevant here. What is significant is that the narrator presents the religious life of Hierapolis as assuming Greek trends in ways that cohere with how Syrian communities are known to have done elsewhere. His description of such adoption and adaptation frames Greek and (As)Syrian culture as intersecting and entangled categories, even as Hierapolis exhibits core "Assyrian" patterns that mark the distinctiveness and tensions of these same categories. The narrator, of course, must render Hierapolis' "foreign" elements, including gods and statues, into Greek idioms for classical Greek readers, who do not inspect Hierapolis for themselves. But while doing so, he posits how (As)Syrians domesticated Greek myths and symbols to produce new and dynamic expressions of (As)Syrian culture, cult, and memory. This is in part why the category of (As)Syrian in *On the Syrian Goddess* is never pegged solely to Near Eastern traditions or defined in clear, dichotomous terms as opposed to the category "Greek." Dynamic and transforming, (As)Syrian culture shares many idioms with Greek culture, and in ways that render incoherent the boundaries of a clear Greek and Assyrian binary.

Representing the divine

The preceding sections have examined how the narrator of *On the Syrian Goddess* poses as a Greek ethnographer and an Assyrian pilgrim. As such, his text presents (As)Syrian religion as integrating Greek idioms and representations to produce new expressions of (As)Syrian culture and narratives of

⁴⁷ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 29–31. Dentzer (1989); Gawlikowski (1989); Freyberger (1998) describe regional features of Syrian sanctuaries and temples. *TEAD* 3, Pl. 14, 19a; Lightfoot (2003) 455–66; Frye *et al.* (1955), 129, no. 1: divine likenesses and *phalloi*.

⁴⁸ Bowersock (1990) 7–9; Kaizer (2011) treat this issue.

⁴⁹ Di Segni (1997) 140–43; Belayche (2009b) 174–79; Waddington (1870) 2309=*IGR* 3.1277.

the (As)Syrian past. The text even doubles as a Greek representation and its "Assyrianization," and in this way it represents a process known to occur among Roman imperial-era Syrian communities in general. These complexities of cultural production and ethnographic representation cohere with another issue raised by the narrator's description of divine iconography: viewing as cultural performance.

The narrator's oscillation between center and margin, its dislocating and decentralizing effects, and its disruption of stable binary cultural categories cohere with how he describes the visual iconography of gods.⁵⁰ Greek and (As)Syrian gods featured points of both tension and intersection. For instance, the narrator claims that Assyrian deities, while sharing names or iconography with classical Greek gods, were nonetheless distinct from them. By doing so, he emphasizes that gods themselves were products of shifting cultural categories generated by the perspectives of their creators and viewers. They also were sites of conflict.⁵¹ The statue of "Zeus" at Hierapolis therefore looked like images of Zeus from elsewhere so that "you could not willingly identify him otherwise," but locals called him by a different name, which Lucian's narrator does not provide.⁵² The god that the Hierapolitans called Apollo had a beard and looked much more masculine than conventional portraits of this boyish god; (As)Syrians criticized Greeks who worshipped the boyish version.⁵³ The Assyrian Hera at Hierapolis shared features with numerous Greek goddesses but could not be concretely identified with a single one.⁵⁴ Just as statues of gods were material confections, they were also culturally constituted. But the cultural categories within which Greeks and (As)Syrians framed their gods were also simultaneously unstable, fluctuating, entangled, and conflicting. Amid mutually masking processes of convergence and divergence, it was unclear whether they used names and signs to split single gods into distinct cultural manifestations or to cast two culturally distinct divinities as being one and same. Assyrian Zeus accordingly had the same iconography as the Greek one, but he possessed a different name. Likewise, the Greek Apollo and Assyrian Apollo had different iconographies, but they had the same name.⁵⁵ In effect, Lucian's narrator depicts the Greeks and the Hierapolitans as worshipping manifestations of Zeus, Apollo, and Hera that were both the same and different, intersecting and at conflict, depending on the perspectives and interpretations of producers and viewers.

⁵⁰ Elsner (2007) 58–62 informs much of this discussion.

⁵¹ Likewise, Goldhill (2006) 160. ⁵² Lucian, *Syr. D.* 31–32.

⁵³ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 35. ⁵⁴ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 32. ⁵⁵ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 32, 35.

The narrator's exploration of cultural instability reaches an apex in his description of the sun and the divine standard. According to him, the (As)Syrians had produced a throne for the sun. But unlike Greeks, they did not fashion an image; they refused to represent what all could see. Greeks, then, ascribed forms to what (As)Syrians left formless, and this trend has bearing on the divine standard that (As)Syrians worshipped. As the introduction emphasizes, the (As)Syrians had raised between Zeus and Hera a "standard" or "sign" (*sēmēion*) that had no form of its own but contained images of other gods. The (As)Syrians had not even given it a name (*ounoma*).⁵⁶ It is otherwise known that Near Eastern standards bore representations of divinities, but in *On the Syrian Goddess*, the ability for the image-less or nameless "sign" to encompass different divinities indexes the distinct modes of visualizing and signifying that Greek and (As)Syrian societies could generate. While disparities among images and names could produce cultural difference for viewers, these names and images only existed through the "sign." Subjects could therefore inscribe upon the "sign" names and images to signify difference, but the nameless, formless "sign" was so polyvalent that it also enabled subjects to endow different words or images with intersecting salience. In fact, the "sign" symbolized a unity of all names and images, an underlying sameness behind an array of masks, names, and likenesses. It therefore defied unambiguous translation and simple binaries, and it could reconstitute differential names and images as signifying intersecting categories. Being nameless and formless, it embodied all names, forms, and significances.

Lucian's other works feature similar complexities in both the signification and cultural framing of divinities. In certain cases, Lucian parodies the gods as cultural products generated in the likenesses of their makers. Accordingly, while foreign gods participated in the cosmopolitan spaces of divine assemblies just as they, by this period, inhabited classical Greek cities, Olympians and their allies imitated sophists by defending the boundaries of "Greek" and "barbarian." In *Icaromenippus*, "metic gods" such as Attis and Sabazius sit conspicuously at an Olympian banquet, and *Zeus the Tragedian* describes how gold and silver statues of gods like Anubis and Mithras, who sometimes could not speak Greek, inhabited the assembly's front row because they were more expensive than Greek ones.⁵⁷ But in *Council of the Gods*, Zeus expels foreign gods who attend the Olympian assembly after Momus examines whether they possessed

⁵⁶ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 33–34.

⁵⁷ Lucian, *Icarom.* 27; *Iup. Trag.* 8–9.

classically Greek ethnic and cultural traits and divine birth.⁵⁸ In this text, Momus derides Mithras as “the Mede in the caftan and tiara” whose ignorance of Greek prevented him from understanding ritual invocations.⁵⁹ But even as assemblies such as this defined and defended Greek cultural boundaries, they marked the incongruities of policing Greek and barbarian identifications. In *Council of the Gods*, Momus “exposes” Dionysus, a staple Greek Olympian divinity, as a barbarian easterner posing as a Greek. Being “not Greek but Syro-Phoenician” by his mother, he was “womanly by nature.”⁶⁰ In this sense, Lucian’s texts describe Greek and barbarian gods not as essential or material facts but as produced by the enacting of boundaries linked to Greek language, descent, and *paideia*. Sophists had truly created Greek gods in their own likeness. But as Dionysus’ example shows, even such sharp boundaries were menaced by ambiguities inherent in defining Greek and barbarian categories. Being rhetorically prescribed, these were unstable and mutable. Like gods, Greeks and barbarians did not simply exist; they were *doxai*, names and images staged or un-staged by performance.

But perhaps more pertinent to *On the Syrian Goddess* is *Heracles*. This text indicates how subjects could split a single divine essence into two culturally divergent manifestations or weld two distinct gods of different societies into one convergent deity.⁶¹ Amid such complex processes, Greek gods were not flawlessly translatable with their “barbarian” counterparts, but their attributes could still intersect. In *Heracles*, Lucian’s text narrates how the Celts worshipped the image of a certain Ogmios. Although Lucian’s narrator describes Ogmios as a manifestation of Heracles adorned by his classical accessories of lion-skin, bow, and club, Ogmios was also bald and old, had sunburned black skin, and used his tongue to drag a chain of captives by their ears.⁶² The narrator therefore adds that Celts thought that the Greeks depicted Heracles in a ridiculous way, and he indicates that Greeks and Celts were ambiguously worshipping a single divine essence that they had split into two cultural manifestations (Heracles has a Celtic counterpart named Ogmios) and combining two culturally distinct entities to form a single god (the Celtic Ogmios is Heracles despite having a different name and some different iconographic features). The Greek and

⁵⁸ For the expulsion, Lucian, *Deor. Conc.* 14–19. Richter (2011) 230–35 analyzes these tensions.

⁵⁹ Lucian, *Deor. Conc.* 9. ⁶⁰ Lucian, *Deor. Conc.* 4.

⁶¹ Elsner (2007) 58–62 treats this text. Richter (2011) 207–29 fully discusses how classical and Roman imperial Greeks, including Plutarch, understood the “unity of the divine.”

⁶² Lucian, *Her.* 3. This Heracles had his conventional lion skin, club, and bow.

Celtic forms of Heracles were thereby characterized by both tension and intersection.

In Lucian's works, such production, effacement, and instability of cultural division among gods mirrored those among humans. Like Hera, Zeus, and Apollo, who have Greek and Assyrian counterparts, the narrator of *On the Syrian Goddess* has split into two cultural manifestations, thereby assuming the masks of a Greek spectator and an actor in an Assyrian spectacle. Yet, as Lucian's narrator oscillates between these interchangeable masks, he exposes their fragility as culturally constituted binary categories. In fact, as the next section argues, Lucian's text delineates how the spectacle of Hierapolis entraps Greek viewers and tattoos them with the marks of "Assyrians."

Assyrian androgyny and the Greek viewer

As described above, Lucian's *On the Syrian Goddess* illustrates how binary cultural categories could be inscribed onto the "sign" through likenesses or names. Yet, it also posits how cultural difference could be effaced amid the underlying unity of the "sign." Binary categories and their symbols could be realigned to share points of entanglement, intersection, or even sameness. These features are relevant to how the narrator's description of (As)Syrian sacred eunuchism complicates the production of binary cultural categories through Herodotean performance. Greek spectators visited the temple to view its rites, but they did not escape its emasculating Assyrianizing spectacle.

The narrator's description of sacred eunuchism most destabilizes the distance between spectator and spectacle through which Herodotean ethnography inscribed difference. Yet, even before he discusses it, the narrator indexes the instability of viewers' self-positioning. He in fact indicates that Herodotean practitioners could not dodge the gaze that (As)Syrians returned. As the image or object of their gaze looked back, they too were embedded in Hierapolis' spectacle. Hera's likeness, for instance, performed the "marvel" (*thōumaston*) of returning viewers' gazes as they moved; it did so simultaneously for multiple people.⁶³ This conflation of spectator and spectacle intensifies after the narrator's description of the statue of Apollo. At that juncture, the narrator increasingly conflates "descriptive ethnography" with pilgrimage and its "ritual-centered" viewing, a form of viewing that embeds worshippers in sacred topographies and rites witnessed by

⁶³ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 32. Elsner (2007) 19–22 analyzes this.

gods.⁶⁴ This conflation increasingly anchors the Herodotean viewer in an emasculating spectacle that marks its actors as Assyrian. Then the narrator recounts the rites of sacred eunuchism.

The narrator begins by distinguishing between two discrete groups that attend the ecstatic rites: a throng of spectators and the enthusiasts who perform them. Amid his visualization of the enthusiasts, the narrator describes how on certain days, “a multitude gathers at the temple, and many Galloi and the sacred personnel that I mentioned perform the rites.”⁶⁵ In the narrator's formulation, the multitude of spectators and the sacred personnel constitute two distinct groups offset by the Greek conjunctions μέν . . . δέ When they have gathered, the sacred personnel cut their arms, pound their breasts, play flutes, beat tambourines, and sing while the spectators witness. After noting that Galloi and sacred personnel are prohibited from entering the temple, the narrator then describes how spectators become Galloi:

When the rest are flute-playing and performing the rites, madness (*maniē*) now comes to many, and many who have come for viewing (*eis theēn*) have then done the following. And I will describe what they do. The young man (*neēniēs*) whom the following awaits, after casting aside his garments, comes with a great shout into the middle (*eis meson*) and takes a sword. And this sword has stood, it seems to me, for many years. After taking it, he immediately emasculates himself and rushes through the city, holding what he has excised in his hands. Into whichever house he throws it, from it he receives female clothing and women's apparel.⁶⁶

By focusing on the ritual of sacred eunuchism and transgendered dressing, this passage engages the Greek inclination to cast (As)Syrians as androgynous sexual deviants not possessing the masculinity of Greek sophists. Yet, in this passage the narrator compromises the position of the Herodotean viewer by describing how “young men” (*neēniāi*) who intend merely to observe (*eis theēn*) the rites of (As)Syrian Galloi and other sacred personnel are unexpectedly consumed by their madness and become Galloi. Despite their external positioning, all spectators, even Herodotean observers, were liable to engage in “ritual centered” viewing that transformed them from the spectacle's observers into its actors.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Elsner (2000) 61; (2001b) 141; (2007) 24 distinguishes pilgrimage and ritual viewing from ethnographic or naturalistic viewing.

⁶⁵ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 50: τὸ μὲν πλῆθος ἐς τὸ ἱρὸν ἀγείρονται, Γάλλοι δὲ πολλοὶ καὶ τοὺς ἑλεῖα, οἱ ἱροὶ ἄνθρωποι, τελέουσιν τὰ ὄργια.

⁶⁶ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 51.

⁶⁷ Likewise, Elsner (2001b) 143–44 explores the spectator's compromised position.

The narrator's emphasis on viewing, madness, and a shift "to the middle" (*eis meson*) of a spectacle presents parallels with *On Dance*'s exploration of performance and visibility, as chapter 9 has described. In this text, the character Lykinos stresses that when spectators watched pantomime, they could be integrated into its spectacle and assume the character of its actors. For that reason, when a dancer had gone mad amid his performance of Ajax, rushed amongst (*eis to meson*) the spectators, and thereby integrated them into the spectacle, many audience members enacted the madness of Ajax that the dancer performed. Lucian's corpus offers additional elaboration of this theme. As we have seen, the "stage" of *Alexander's* false prophet Alexander in similar ways attracts the Epicurean narrator "Lucian" into its deceptive performances as a character and actor. Likewise, *Icaromenippus'* Menippus returns from heaven, from which he has impartially observed the world's "theater," to Athens to witness and benefit from his philosophical rivals' demise. In *Toxaris*, the Scythian interlocutor Toxaris, when challenged to show that Scythians valued friendship more than Greeks, narrates a tale in which he is a main character. In this tale, he attended games with his friend Sisennes, and he thus anticipated the "exceptional spectacle" (*paradoxon theama*), "theater" (*theatron*), and "sight" (*thea*) of Greek athletics. But encountering Roman blood sport, he and Sisennes were drawn "into the middle (*eis to meson*)" of the (amphi)theater and shifted from spectators to participants in gladiatorial combat.⁶⁸ Such parallels with *On Dance* and other Lucianic texts suggest that in *On the Syrian Goddess*, one who performed as a Herodotean viewer could not maintain proper distance from the spectacle of Syrian enthusiasm. By enacting the same "ritual centered" viewing, madness, and rite of initiation, and bearing the same androgynous body, cultured Greek viewers mimicked and became (As)Syrian pilgrims, and even enthusiasts.

The narrator further elicits the instability of spectator/spectacle as he shifts his focus to typical pilgrims. According to him, all who attended the festival at Hierapolis shaved their heads and eyebrows and received a mark, perhaps a tattoo (*stigma*). For this reason "all Assyrians bear marks."⁶⁹ If all who attended the temple's festival received a mark (*stigma*), then even Greek viewers assumed the definitive marks that identified their bearers as "Assyrian" pilgrims. It is in this vein that Lucian's narrator concludes by comparing the temple's pilgrims to the Greek Troezenians, who dedicated locks to Hippolytus before marriage. He describes how (As)Syrian youths grew sacred locks from birth, cut them, and placed them in gold or silver

⁶⁸ Lucian, *Tox.* 59.

⁶⁹ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 59: ἅπαντες Ἀσσύριοι στιγματηφορεύουσιν.

caskets onto which they had "inscribed (*epigrapsantes*) their names." Then, while inserting himself as a character into Hierapolis' spectacle, the anonymous narrator describes how he had also cut and dedicated a lock of his hair when he was a young pilgrim. As he ends his text, he states that his casket with his inscribed name, which he significantly does not divulge, still remained within the temple:

The young men (*neēniai*) offer the first shavings of their beard. And as for the youths (*neōisi*), they let out sacred locks from birth, and when they are in the temple, they cut (*tamnousi*) them. When they have placed them in caskets (*aggea*), some in silver, many in gold, they fix them up in the temple. They leave after each of them has inscribed (*epigrapsantes*) their names (*ounomata*). When I was still a youth (*neos*), I completed this rite (*epetelesa*), and my braid and name (*ounoma*) are still in the temple.⁷⁰

The narrator's vocabulary in describing his dedication replicates the language which he uses previously for the spectacle of sacred eunuchism that *neēniai* enacted. It is therefore worth stressing the parallels that the narrator establishes between sacred eunuchism and his dedication of his braid. First, the narrator relates how both he and Kombabos had cut and placed their excised members in caskets (*aggea*), and just as Kombabos left his casket with the Assyrian king, the narrator imitates him by leaving his lock and casket for the reader as his text ends.⁷¹ Second, both these acts spell a transition from the Herodotean viewing of a spectacle to participation as an actor within it. In fact, they outline rituals of initiation that transform Herodotean spectators into pilgrims/enthusiasts who mimic Kombabos in different ways. Finally, the narrator indicates that while youths (*neoi*) dedicate a lock, a young man (*neēniēs*) dedicates the shavings of his first beard, unless, of course, he is one of the *neēniai* whom the narrator previously describes as performing the rite of sacred eunuchism. While the narrator conspicuously emphasizes how he dedicated a lock as a *neos* and, by extension, received a mark, he omits whether he had grown a beard and dedicated its first-shavings as a *neēniēs*. The narrator thereby raises mercurial questions about what ritual activity he underwent as a *neēniēs*. Was he a typical observer and pilgrim who dedicated his beard's first-shavings and received a *stigma*? Or did he engage in sacred eunuchism in ways that prevented him from growing his first beard and from entering the temple

⁷⁰ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 60. Lightfoot rightly treats *toisi neōisi* as the subject of the lock cutting, even if its rendering in the dative case poses problems and is obelized in her edition.

⁷¹ The narrator leaves his braid with the reader and presents an anonymous *sphragis* (a seal identifying the author) where many authors leave an actual signature. Lightfoot (2003) 534 and the scholars that she credits.

as an adult.⁷² These questions and the narrator's imitation of Kombabos, of course, have implications for what the narrator leaves for his reader. When he ends his account, he leaves his lock in a casket with a name (*ounoma*) that he does not reveal. But does he also leave his testicles, just as Kombabos did when he departed for Hierapolis?

As asserted above, the narrator outlines how even Herodotean spectators of Hierapolis become pilgrims and enthusiasts of its spectacle. He also models himself on Kombabos and raises the possibility that he is a sacred eunuch. His account of how he dedicated his braid therefore undercuts distinctions between spectator and actor and confronts how sophists like Dio positioned themselves as masculine Greek sophists by mapping an immutably barbarian and androgynous Syria. In the same way that the Hierapolitans conceived of Kombabos as a woman in men's clothes and a man in women's clothes, cultured Greek spectators engaging in Herodotean viewing too entered Hierapolis' incoherently gendered spectacle of (As)Syrian eunuchism in ways that destabilized their position as external male viewers.⁷³ But just as important is the narrator's premise that such cultural and gendered ambiguity constituted a form of perfection or completion, not a lack or flaw. In fact, while describing his braid's dedication, the narrator's language of cutting (*tamnō*) and use of the Greek verb (*teleō*), which simultaneously encapsulated the obtainment of perfection, of completion, and of cultic initiation, draws parallels with his work's previous events. These include the narrator's account of Kombabos' castration and foundation of the temple, his description of Apollo's statue, and his discussion of sacred eunuchism.⁷⁴ When Kombabos had "cut off his privates and put them into a small casket (*aggēion*)," he had "made himself incomplete (*atelea*)."⁷⁵ But by emasculating himself, he "completed" (*exetelese*) the temple that his queen's lust and his king's jealousy had nearly left incomplete (*atelea*).⁷⁶ Likewise, the temple's Galloi emasculated themselves in imitation of Kombabos, and they therefore underwent a sacred rite of initiation (*teleousin*) and achieved perfection despite not fully being men. Yet, to complicate this picture further, Lucian's narrator explains how (As)Syrians depicted Apollo as bearded because they believed that images of gods should not be "imperfect" (*atelea*). Since they understood youth and its lack of full masculinity to be "incomplete" (*ateles*), they represented

⁷² Lucian, *Syr. D.* 27, 50. ⁷³ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 26–27.

⁷⁴ Elsner (2001b) 144–49 provides a stimulating analysis informing opinions to follow.

⁷⁵ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 20: ἀτελέα ἑωυτὸν ἐποίηεν, καὶ ταμῶν τὰ αἰδοῖα ἐς ἀγγήϊον μικρὸν κατέθετο.

⁷⁶ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 23, 26. Elsner (2001b) 147.

him as a bearded adult and differently from Greeks who adorned him with flawed boyish features.⁷⁷

By mapping the shifting significance of “completion” and “incompletion” and their implications for the ritualized performance of sacred eunuchism and androgyny, the narrator confronts the gender and cultural categories that sophists like Dio had implemented. As we have seen, Dio conceived of the Near East's inhabitants as being incomplete men or androgynous as he enacted his own Greek masculine status. By contrast, Lucian's narrator suggests that such acts of eunuchism and androgyny constitute not only a lack but also a fulfillment. Through the lack produced by emasculation, the eunuch Kombabos had completed Hierapolis' temple in the same way that (As)Syrians had produced a “perfect” image of Apollo, and the narrator, like the Galloi, had “completed” a sacred rite of initiation when he cut and dedicated his lock. These episodes of completion and ritual initiation amid spectacles of sacred eunuchism premise that emasculation did not merely index the lack of a masculine subject but also its transcendence. Just as sacred eunuchism marked the stage at which spectators became performers of a spectacle's madness, it also marked where they simultaneously became “incomplete” (not quite gendered) and “complete” (not circumscribed by gender's limits) by assuming the androgynous qualities of (As)Syrians. Such formulations of simultaneous lack and perfection rendered incoherent the categorical difference between the complete Greek male subject and the flawed imperfect Assyrian. After all, the Greek Apollo with his “imperfect” beardless features appeared as androgynous as (As)Syrian sacred eunuchs who completed their rites of initiation, and the “perfect” Assyrian Apollo wore the beard so central to Greek sophists' masculinity.⁷⁸

In sum, by modeling himself on the eunuch Kombabos to describe how he cut his lock and “inscribed his name,” Lucian's self-identifying Assyrian narrator, while speaking with the voice of a Greek *pepaideu-menos* and a Herodotean spectator, inscribes himself as an actor in Hierapolis' spectacle. He also stages the writing and reading of his text as the performing of a pilgrimage that results in rites of initiation and perhaps even sacred eunuchism. Because his text, especially when read orally, draws its Greek readers/viewers to mimic him, to gaze upon Hierapolis through his (As)Syrian mask, and to enter the (As)Syrian spectacle as “ritual

⁷⁷ Lucian, *Syr. D.* 35.

⁷⁸ As Elsner (2001b) 147–48 observes. For sophists' beards vs. eunuchs' androgyny, also Lucian, *Eun.* 6–9.

centered" viewers, it enacts a literary performance that does not stage difference between spectating (and quintessentially male) Greek sophists and androgynous (As)Syrian "others" but frames them as "complete" beings un-sundered by dichotomies, by boundaries of difference.⁷⁹ It is for this reason significant that the self-defining "Assyrian" narrator, while speaking as a Greek *pepaideumenos*, inserts himself into his text's spectacle as an actor who has "completed the rite" (*epetelesa*) of inscribing his anonymous name on the box in which he dedicated his excised braid. As an (As)Syrian pilgrim and a Greek spectator whom the madness of Assyrian spectacle has "Assyrianized," the complete narrator with a nameless name wears the *stigma* that initiated (As)Syrians bear, and as a potential eunuch, he may not have reached full manhood as normatively defined by sophists. Inscribed on a single figure, the categories of cultured Greek spectator and (As)Syrian spectacle have become entangled and interchangeable. Both are marked by the same *stigma*; both inhabit the same androgynous, nameless form. And if the narrator ends his account by leaving his readers with his braid and anonymous signature, he may be leaving them with his manhood as well. But the narrator never opens the box in which "his true self lies concealed," and he never reveals his name (*ounoma*).⁸⁰ He instead draws his text's cultured Greek readers/viewers, who observe Hierapolis through his mask or even perform his part orally, into its emasculating spectacle of (As)Syrian madness and leaves them with the marks of initiates. As they assume the narrator's (As)Syrian *schēma* and undergo his rites of initiation, Greek *pepaideumenoι* (perhaps) lose their testicles too.

Significantly, Lucian features a similar intersection or entanglement of socio-cultural categories, and thereby the incoherence of their boundaries, in the *Dialogues of the Courtesans*. In one of the dialogues, the sex worker Leaina describes to her colleague Klonarion a threesome in which she had engaged with two women named Megilla and Demonassa. Amid this tryst, Megilla had removed the wig from her head and said, "Have you seen such a handsome young man?" When Leaina responded that she did not see a young man, Megilla ordered, "Don't feminize (*katathēlune*) me," and then added that his/her name was actually Megillos and that (s)he was

⁷⁹ The emasculation of Lucian's anonymous narrator premises the unraveling of categorical opposites, such as true/untrue, presence/absence, signifier/signified within the structure of written discourse. It also anticipates modern formulations of the phallus as the master signifier within a repressive symbolic order. Lacan (1968) 11–12, 79; (1977) 185–87; Butler (1990) 57–58; Derrida (1981) 5, 168–69, with (1976) 23–24, 65.

⁸⁰ Elsner (2001b) 146.

married to Demonassa. When Leaina asked Megillos/a whether (s)he had "that male member" (*to andreion ekeino*) and did "for Demonassa what men do," Megillos/a stated that (s)he did not have "that thing" and did not need it to please women. Leaina followed up her question by asking whether (s)he was a hermaphrodite who had the qualities of both genders. Megillos/a answered this question in a very intriguing way. Denying that (s)he was a hermaphrodite, (s)he claimed that (s)he was "entirely a man" (*to pan anēr*) and that (s)he had the judgment (*gnōmē*), desire (*epithymia*), and all the other parts of a man (*talla panta andros*), but that (s)he was "born just like" the women Leaina and Demonassa. In addition, (s)he had something that (s)he used to please women "instead of the male member (*anti tou andreiou*)."⁸¹

In such ways, Lucian's Megillos/a raises questions and suspends answers about her identity. If (s)he has no penis and was born just like other women but was "entirely a man," who was (s)he? Like Kombabos, who could be construed as a man dressed like a woman and a woman dressed as a man, Megillos/a rendered the boundaries of normative gender categories incoherent, and his/her statements even suggest that (s)he was simultaneously a man without a penis and a woman who either penetrated or had found a substitute for penetration. (S)he was "incomplete" (not quite a man or a woman) and "complete" (not circumscribed by boundaries of gender). In this episode, the phallus ceased to signify the Greek male subject, and the feminine, mediated by Lucian, assumed a subjectivity that Greek sophists, empowered by Rome, had repressed and rendered abject.⁸² This subjectivity de-centered the masculine positioning so central to sophistic culture.

On the Syrian Goddess likewise de-centers the masculine Greek self-positioning of the *pepaideumenos* spectator and articulates the repressed subjectivity of the androgynous (As)Syrian. Through rites of sacred eunuchism and initiation that re-stage viewers of spectacle as spectacle itself, Lucian's narrator locates Greek subject and barbarian other in a single mutilated, ambiguously gendered, and anonymous body. This "complete" body has the *stigma* that "marks" all spectators who attend Hierapolis' rites as Assyrian,⁸³ but what this *stigma* also marks is a foundational anonymity,

⁸¹ Lucian, *Dial. Meret.* 5.3–4.

⁸² By reconstituting traditional categories, whether literary or social, in a continuous "staging of the self as other," Lucian produced a complicated subject, as Gilhuly (2007) 90–91 argues. Gilhuly analyzes how Lucian stages female courtesans as assuming the rhetoric and subjective positioning of sophists in ways that frame both types as economically motivated "social climbers" (83). Similarly, Gilhuly (2006) 278–89 reads Megillos/a as positing a "female phallus."

⁸³ Elsner (2001b) 143.

the effacement of difference between Greek viewer and (As)Syrian enthusiast, the underlying namelessness, formlessness, and unity of the “sign.” Dio’s *First Tarsian Oration* framed masculine sexual dispositions as differentiating real Greek men from the Near East’s androgynous barbarians. By contrast, the textual performance of Lucian’s *On the Syrian Goddess* restages masculine Greek and androgynous Syrian as interchangeable faces inscribed on a single actor and concealing a shared madness, the “marks” of a common *schēma*, and the same nameless polyvalent *sēmēion*. In this sense, the binary of Greek viewer and (As)Syrian pilgrim, of masculine spectator and androgynous “mad” spectacle, has become incoherent. Just as Megillos/a had the body of both a penis-less man and a woman who penetrated, the anonymous narrator of *On the Syrian Goddess*, and even his cultured Greek readers/viewers, don the masks of both a Greek eunuch⁸⁴ and an (As)Syrian who gazes upon the spectacle of Greek androgyny. They do so in ways that frame the categories of Greek and (As)Syrian as intersecting, entangled, and transforming products of performance and the “sign.” In the end, despite all the masks, cultural tension, and appearance of difference, everyone is essentially the same. Everyone is an actor, playing the same game: *doxa*.

Conclusion

In such ways, Lucian’s *On the Syrian Goddess* stages a meta-*doxa* through which the author interrogates and examines the production of cultural categories that sophists created through performance. It maps how Syrians produced (As)Syrian culture by cultivating Greek idioms, and it shows how they could constitute “Greek” and “(As)Syrian” as intersecting, shifting categories expressed by the same signs and not possessing clear, coherent boundaries. Lucian’s counter-performance, however, had limitations. As typifies imperial settings, the critical perspectives embedded in Lucian’s text, which were oriented toward audiences of erudite sophists and Greeks, did not directly facilitate political strategies of Syrians. They could have just as easily reinforced normative cultural and gender categories by empowering sophists foremost to experiment with hybridity, “otherness,” and meta-*doxa*.⁸⁵ Yet, as the following chapter stresses, the critique of performance and cultural categorization encapsulated by Lucian had widespread appeal among Syrians in the second and third centuries CE. As we have

⁸⁴ Lucian, *Eun.* 6–13 likewise features a beardless eunuch acting as a Greek sophist.

⁸⁵ McClintock (1995) 61–74 on Bhabha’s hybridity.

seen, Justin and Tatian especially implemented literary performances that “staged” themselves as bearers of *Logos* who were exposing the demon-induced theatricality, fictiveness, and *doxa* of “Greco-Roman” culture, sophistic practices, and narratives of a classical past. In the third century, the political and military insurgency of the Palmyrenes would be the actualization of such ideas and the validation of such embodied practices. The next and final chapter examines how.

The ascendancy of Syrian Greekness and Romanness

Some time during the mid-third century CE, Herodian described “the Syrian *ethnos*” as “vain by nature” and “prepared to revolutionize the established order.”¹ Herodian disliked Syrians. Fickle and capricious, their debauched festivities corrupted the most stable emperors.² As soldiers, they even rendered capable Roman commanders ineffective; they were fawns serving under lions.³ Instead of cultivating elevated Greek culture, they merely told “jokes with *paideia*” during degenerate pantomime performances.⁴ Herodian’s views cohered with those of many Greeks and Romans who exoticized Syrians as perverts with a proclivity for receiving anal penetration, performing oral sex, and engaging in bizarre acts of sacred eunuchism.⁵ With their harsh accents, tambourines, strange hats, and sexual transgressions, Syrians were not even “Achaean dregs.”⁶ In fact, as Herodian claims, Septimius Severus’ victory over Pescennius Niger’s army of Antiochenes and Syrians at Issus, like Alexander’s victory over Darius there, represented how westerners had overcome “easterners.”⁷ Only foolish Roman politicians dared to establish Syria as a cultural and imperial center. When Avidius Cassius, the legate of Syria and a native of Cyrrhus, revolted against the emperor Marcus Aurelius in the 170s, the Athenian sophist Herodes Atticus sent Cassius a short simple rebuke: “Herodes to Cassius, you have gone mad.”⁸

Such sentiments disguised how many Syrians fashioned themselves as Greeks or Romans during this period. For example, as the activity of Avidius Cassius shows, the reigns of the Antonine and Severan emperors

¹ Hdn. 2.7.9, on the Antiochenes’ support for Pescennius Niger (193 CE). Herodian’s statement apparently refers to the province (*ethnos*) of Coele Syria that existed in his lifetime, but it coheres with mainstream views on the broader Syrian *ethnos*.

² Hdn. 2.7.9. ³ Cass. Dio, 72 [71].25.1–3. ⁴ Hdn. 2.10.7.

⁵ Ap. *Met.* 8.24–29 discusses Syrian priests of Atargatis. Isaac (2004) 335–51 explores Near Eastern stereotypes in Greek and Roman literature.

⁶ As argued by Umbricius, the interlocutor of Juvenal, 3.60–66.

⁷ Hdn. 3.4.3. ⁸ Philostr., *VS* 563.

oversaw increased Syrian participation in Roman senatorial life and imperial administration. This process often cohered with cultural assimilation to mainstream Roman Italian or Greek norms.⁹ In other cases, Syrians generated discrepant definitions of Greekness and Romanness anchored in Near Eastern cultural forms. In fact, third-century Syrians expressed diverse overlapping configurations of Romanness inhabiting a spectrum between classical and non-classical and, it seems, geared for different audiences. In some instances, their use of Latin and Italian idioms delineated Roman imperial authority, significant interfacing with the imperial administration, or particular forms of high prestige shared by Roman magistrates. In others, they used Greek idioms to express a form of Romanness common to a network of Greek polities and, increasingly, Roman “colonies.” This network constituted the core structuring principle of what Syrians increasingly framed as a Greek and Roman landscape. At times communities even expressed Romanness through Aramaic and Near Eastern idioms, especially to local Aramaic-speaking audiences. Amid these tendencies, certain cities inclined toward symbols of a specific origin, but many integrated Greek, Italian, or Near Eastern forms into their civic cultures. Some diversified certain cultural types among specific media and others interwove them in complex ways. Syrian expressions of Romanness were therefore extremely diverse and defy simple typologies.

The possibilities for cultural expression delineated above constitute only some connotations that Roman, Greek, and Near Eastern idioms bore in Roman Syria. The full spectrum of meanings escapes the limits of a written historical account. Still, what must be emphasized is that amid complex and overlapping expressions of Greekness and Romanness spanning from fully classical to “non-classical,” Syrian communities increasingly asserted their expressions of Greek and Roman culture as authoritative, and they established their communities as imperial and cultural centers, thereby destabilizing the pre-eminence of cities further west. By the mid-third century CE, Palmyrene dynasts had adopted Roman imperial titulature as they governed Syria, and they asserted Palmyra’s distinctive form of Greek and Roman (or Greco-Roman) civic culture as legitimate.¹⁰ They also expressed imperial authority and centrality to various local and regional audiences through a complex array of Latin, Greek, and Near Eastern symbols. An assortment of inscriptions, papyrus and parchment documents, and the *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* elucidate how this process materialized.

⁹ Alföldy (1977) 318–22; Leunissen (1989) 46–48, 366–70.

¹⁰ Veyne (2005) examines the “Greco-Roman” empire.

As this chapter argues, third-century Syrians converted the diverse “Greek” and “Roman” performances described above into an agency embedded in insurgency. As precursors to this phenomenon, local authority figures frequently adopted Roman imperial titles, in various languages, to signify to diverse audiences that they were representatives of Roman governance operating within a distinctly Roman imperial system. They did so even as centralized Roman control faltered and as they exerted regional governance with increasing autonomy. Such Syrians in fact governed Syria as *consularis* (*hypatikos*), *imperator* (*autokrator*), “King of kings,” and even Augustus (*Sebastos*). This process was shaped by Syrians’ culturally discrepant practices of Greek and Roman citizenship, which themselves occupied a vast spectrum. Whether they cultivated mainstream classical Greek idioms of the Tetrapolis or assumed the extremely “hybrid” expressions of the steppe frontier, Syrians increasingly located Syria at the center of a Greek and Roman imperial landscape. Like the authors Lucian, Tatian, and Justin Martyr, they fashioned forms of provincial subjectivity challenging the cultural pre-eminence of Athens and Rome.

The most relevant and enduring example of such a vision, as this chapter stresses, was Palmyra. Abnegating a *doxa* that marked Rome and Athens as imperial or cultural centers and that defined the “classical” as legitimate culture, the Palmyrenes generated and defended their version of a Greco-Roman space centered on Palmyra’s culturally heterogeneous city.¹¹ This phenomenon, however, also had its roots in massive socio-political transformations of the third-century Roman and Persian empires. These included the system failure, dynastic squabbles, and civil wars of the Roman imperial system, the enactment of the *constitutio Antoniniana*, the Syrians’ adoption and adaptation of the status of *colonia*, and the stabilization of the Sasanian dynasty and Zoroastrianism in Persia. Amid these political shifts, Syrians sustained innovative Greek and Roman (or “Greco-Roman”) civic practices, and Palmyrenes eventually governed Syria as Roman imperial figures.

The third century and political transformations

The Severan dynasty initiated many changes that eventually disrupted the material cohesion of the imperial system, stimulated debates about cultural legitimacy, and provoked provincial insurgency in the Near East. While consolidating power, it also shaped many conditions that

¹¹ Millar (1993a) 532; Sartre (2001a) 981–82 assert.

empowered Syrians' self-positioning within the empire. Its founder, Septimius Severus, won the civil wars of 193–94 CE. From Lepcis Magna in North Africa, he had previously married Julia Domna, a daughter of the priest of Elagabal in Syrian Emesa. His imperial tenure thereby elevated a family previously located outside the Roman senatorial and equestrian aristocracy and dwelling on imperial margins.¹² Despite Severus' own Punic origins and his wife's affiliation with the aniconic sun god of Emesa, the imperial family cultivated more classical Roman or Italian idioms while ruling from Rome.

Amid his acculturation as senator and emperor, Septimius Severus introduced drastic changes to Near Eastern regions that empowered Syrians' unique claims to Greekness and Romanness. After defeating Pescennius Niger, he occupied territory as far east as Nisibis and created two new districts or provinces called Osrhoene and Mesopotamia.¹³ These joined current provinces of the Syrian *ethnos* (Coele Syria, Syria Phoenice, and Syria Palestina).¹⁴ He left Edessa an "autonomous enclave" overseen by the Abgarid dynasty, which had previously governed the region.¹⁵ Subsequently, he and his successors organized local inhabitants into Greek civic systems characteristic of the Roman Near East, either through the intervention of Abgarids or, eventually, provincial governors.¹⁶ These Greek civic communities, however, incorporated Syriac-speakers inhabiting an array of urban or village landscapes and social structures. These became citizens of Greek *politeiai* and even civic councilors on *boulai*, even as local customs impacted their civic performances.

¹² Potter (2004) 99.

¹³ It is widely believed that Severus made Osrhoene and (perhaps subsequently) Mesopotamia into provinces, but Speidel (2007) 415–22, 424–29 from epigraphic evidence argues that Osrhoene, governed by a procurator, was variously a segment of Coele Syria and Mesopotamia.

¹⁴ By late antiquity, inhabitants of these provinces and their subsequent adaptations, in which dialects of "the language of the Syrians" (Aramaic) were spoken, defined themselves or received recognition as Syrians whether they spoke Greek or Aramaic individually. Theodoret, *Quest. In Iud.* 19.5–9 in Marcos and Sáenz-Badillos (1979); John of Ephesus, *Lives of the Eastern Saints* 25: 527–29; 49: 694; 50: 154–55 in Brooks (1923–25).

¹⁵ Speidel (2007) 415–16, 422–424; Sommer (2010) 222–23. This study does not cover Osrhoene in the first and second centuries CE, which scholars often reconstruct by consulting the sixth-century *Chronicle of Edessa* (containing roughly contemporary material), the fifth-century *Teachings of Addai*, late antique chronicles, and the inscriptions of Drijvers and Healey (1999). Ramelli (1999), (2009a); Ross (2001) 46–68; Sommer (2005a) 228–48; Greisiger, Rammelt, and Tubach (2009); Millar (2011) 96–98.

¹⁶ Cass. Dio, 75.2.3, 3.2; 78 [77].12.1.a. Although Osrhoene was governed by an equestrian procurator, the Abgarids initially continued to govern the vicinity of Edessa. According to Cassius Dio or an editor, the Abgarids violently imposed "the customs of the Romans" upon them until Caracalla deposed Abgar VIII (or IX) in 212/13. See Ross (2001) 54–64.

Papyrus documents highlight the cultural complexities that polities of Osrhoene and the Middle Euphrates region, which Rome controlled as early as the 160s, exhibited after Severan rule, especially in the 240s and 250s.¹⁷ The Syriac Aramaic-speaking Aurelios Abidsautas (ʿwrls ʿbšwt) joined the Greek *boulē* of the newly established city of Neapolis in the mid-third century, but he still signed civil documents in Syriac.¹⁸ In 250, Aurelios Barbesymes (ʿwrls brbʿ šmyn), a citizen of Carrhae, signed a Greek public document in Syriac Aramaic and called himself a Harranian in Aramaic; the document described him in Greek as *Karrēnos*. Despite boasting of the city's Aramaic name, his signature emphasized that he belonged to the *phylē Anton(in)ianē*, a civic "tribe" of a Greek collective named after the emperor Caracalla.¹⁹ Similarly, Batnae was reconstituted as the Greek city of Markopolis, and it issued documents in Syriac and Greek in the 240s. A Syriac civil document indicates that a certain Markos Aurelios Alexander served as *archōn* there in 242, and in 249 numerous civic magistrates wrote Syriac signatures on a Greek bill of sale for Maththabeine, daughter of Abba (*mtbyn brt ʿb*), a *Markoupoleitis*.²⁰ While Greek was the primary civil language of such communities, individuals could express Greek citizenship in Syriac Aramaic.

Such interweaving of Greek and Near Eastern idioms in Osrhoene and the Middle Euphrates region of Syria/Mesopotamia coheres with broader trends. Starting in 194–95, Severan intervention in fact accelerated the dissemination of Greek forms near Edessa, which to a small extent had existed previously. For this reason, tomb or house mosaics increasingly combined Greek mythological themes, such as Orpheus' tantalizing of animals, with Syriac inscriptions.²¹ The inhabitants of Edessa still

¹⁷ Edwell (2008) 68–70 analyzes Roman administration in the Middle Euphrates.

¹⁸ *P. Euphr.* 4.4 and 20 describe Aurelios Abidsautas as a *bouleutēs* of Neapolis. Previously, Aurelios Abidsautas had resided in Beth Phouraia, a village under the jurisdiction of the *mētrokōmē* Appadana. *P. Euphr.* 1.4–6, 9.17. When Appadana was made a Greek *polis* called Neapolis, Abidsautas joined the civic council while maintaining property in Beth Phouraia. *P. Euphr.* 1 and 4 are in Feissel and Gascou (1995) 71–72, 96–979 is in Feissel, Gascou, and Teixidor (1997) 41–42.

¹⁹ Feissel, Gascou, and Teixidor (1997) 46–49, *P. Euphr.* 10. Yon (2004) 327–30; Millar (2011) 101–3 provide useful discussion.

²⁰ P3 in Drijvers and Healey (1999) 244, lines 5. Sartre (2001a) 645 describes Markopolis' founding. Feissel, Gascou, and Teixidor (1997) 11–12, 16, *P. Euphr.* 6–7 for Syriac signatures. See also Millar (2011) 101–3.

²¹ Yon (2004); Healey (2007); Millar (2011) examine Greek idioms at Edessa and Osrhoene. Greek inscriptions are attested by *IGSK* 65.25–27 and 32–33. For mosaics, Drijvers and Healey (1999) Pl. 52–53 (the Phoenix and Orpheus), Pl. 66 (Achilles and Patroclus); Healey (2006) (Orpheus, 194 CE); Balty and Briquel-Chatonnet (2000) (Hecuba and Priam; Troilus); Bowersock (2001), (2006) 36–38 (Prometheus). Many mosaics depicted the deceased's family and were arranged in two-dimensional, hierarchical fashion (Pl. 48–49, 51, 55); clothes were more "native" than Greek.

produced Syriac Aramaic inscriptions, but Greek and bilingual inscriptions are also attested.²² It is difficult to date precisely the (now entitled) *Book of the Laws of the Countries* produced by Bardaisan's school, but this Syriac work, modeled on the Platonic dialogue and influenced by Stoic thought, reflects the complex interweaving of Greek and Near Eastern traditions amid increased Roman intervention.²³ It also arguably posits that inhabitants of the Roman imperial system could still exercise the will to maintain their own traditional laws or customs (*nomoi*) and resist assimilation amid Roman imperial pressure.²⁴ Jews and Christians achieved this feat; fate and nature did not determine culture.

The Severans and their successors did not merely organize Osrhoene's inhabitants into networks of "Greek" collectives embedded in Roman provinces. They initiated two innovations that prompted Syrians to deem Syria, with its vast cultural spectrum, as a culturally Roman space. First, in 212 CE the emperor Caracalla extended Roman citizenship to all the empire's free inhabitants. As a result, most Syrians were thereafter Roman citizens and, at least theoretically, under jurisdiction of Roman private law.²⁵ Second, the Severans and subsequent regimes gave many Greek civic communities throughout Syria the rank of *colonia* and, in certain instances, the privilege of *ius Italicum*. Their citizens were accordingly recognized as Romans (and Greeks) and governed by Roman private law because the imperial administration considered them "colonists."²⁶ Traditionally, a "colony" in Syria consisted of Italian Romans or veterans who established an overseas settlement while having full rights as Roman citizens.²⁷ Conversely, the Severan emperors often granted citizens of Greek cities the rank of "colonists" and extended to them privileges conferred by such a title.²⁸ Despite not being of Italian origin or necessarily veterans, Syrian citizens of such *coloniae* could claim that their cities were collectively as

Some mosaics, however, sported inscriptions in Greek and Syriac and represented figures with Greek artistic styles. See Healey (2006); Bowersock (2001); Drijvers and Healey (1999) Bm 1, Pl. 60.

²² Drijvers and Healey (1999) Bm 1; Ramelli (2003); *IGSK* 65.25–27, 32–33.

²³ Ramelli (2009b) examines Bardaisan and his school, sources, and bibliography. Drijvers (1964) 74 and Ramelli (2009b) 54–60, (2009c) 18–32 treat the complicated issues of date and redaction.

²⁴ *The Book of the Laws of the Countries*, 583–611 (Drijvers (1964) 40–62, Ramelli (2009c) 175–207).

²⁵ Garnsey (2004) treats citizenship and law. Also, Ando (2010) 40–45.

²⁶ Millar (1990) 31–56 thoroughly examines cities that received colonial status under the Severans and thereafter, as well as the numismatic evidence. As for documents, the jurists Ulpian and Paul, *Dig.* 50.15.1, 8 indicate that Laodicea, Tyre, Emesa, and Palmyra earned *ius Italicum* and colonial status under the Severans. Antioch was promoted to *colonia* under Antoninus Pius without receiving *ius Italicum*, although it perhaps earned it under the Severans.

²⁷ At Berytus and Niha, Roman colonists and Greek citizens belonged to different civic organizations. Sawaya (2002) 132 and (for coins) generally (2009).

²⁸ But some *coloniae* involved military settlement. Dąbrowa (2004); Stoll (2009).

Roman as Italian polities, especially (but not necessarily) if their cities possessed *ius Italicum*.²⁹ As such, some Greek citizens presented themselves as Roman colonists in Greek. In Dura-Europos, three members of the *boulē* with Aramaic or Persian names, Goras, Orthonobazos, and Zebidadados described themselves as *kolōnes* in an inscription that they erected in the temple of Artemis.³⁰ Likewise, the successful athlete Aurelios Septimios Eireneios emphasized in his career inscription that he, a Laodicean, was a *metropolitēs* and a *kolōn*.³¹

Amid universal Roman citizenship and such grants of colonial rank and, less frequently, *ius Italicum*, Syrians increasingly expressed Romanness through Greek or local idioms. *Coloniae* provide important (but not the only) examples for how this occurred. In some cases, their civic offices possessed either conventional Latin names or translated these names into Greek. On coins, they typically featured their status in Greek, and some, such as Sidon and Damascus, did so in Latin.³² Yet, in one document, third-century civic scribes of Edessa, whose coins otherwise celebrated colonial status in Greek, described their city in Syriac as “Antonina Edessa the Glorious, Colony (*qlwny*), Metropolis Aurelia Alexandria.” In this specific case, they transliterated Edessa’s Roman and Greek titles in Syriac, and they described its citizens as “Edessenes,” not the Aramaic *’Urhāyē*.³³ One Edessene belonged to Edessa’s “twelfth *phylē*,” a civic tribe. According to this document, Edessa also possessed an imperial priest and *stratēgoi*, which was the Greek and Syriac translation of *duumviri*, the key officials of a Roman *colonia*. Two of these officials were labeled “Roman equestrian (*hḫws rhmwš*),” and one of the *duumviri*, Markos Aurelios Abgaros (*mrqws ’wrlyws ’bgr*) identified himself by his full name and the title *stratēgos* in Syriac and then added the name *Abgaros* in Greek.³⁴ Likewise, when

²⁹ *Dig.* 50.15.1, 8.

³⁰ *SEG* 2.824; Cumont (1926) no. 50. In the mid- and late-third centuries, *coloniae* sometimes integrated local divinities into their civic-cultic practices. Belayche (2009a) 189–90, 193–94 discusses Gaza, Scythopolis, and Neapolis (in Palestine).

³¹ *IGR* 3.1012 = *IGLS* 4.1265.

³² Millar (1990) 31–56 explores such attestations. Dąbrowa (2004) suggests that Sidon, Damascus, and other *coloniae* using Latin legends had veteran settlement.

³³ *P.1/P. Dura* 28, Drijvers and Healey (1999) 232, line 4; now Healey (2009) 264–75 for text, translation, and commentary. *P.3*, Drijvers and Healey (1999) 244, lines 3–4 use identical titulature. But *P.2*, (238), lines 4–5 calls the city both *’Urhāy* and Edessa and the “mother of all the cities in Mesopotamia” (Healey (2009) 252–64 provides text, translation, and commentary). This titulature seems linked to the brief reign of Abgar X. *P.1/P. Dura* 28, Drijvers and Healey (1999) 232, line 8, 20–21 for Edessa’s name. *BMC Arabia*, 99–118, Pl. 14.17–17.6 attests the status on Edessa’s coins. Feissel, Gascou, and Teixidor (1997) 30, 46, *P. Euphrat.* 8.15, 10.8 document the status for Nisibis and Carrhae. Millar (1990) 31–66 presents the documentary and numismatic evidence for *coloniae*; Millar (2011) 101–3 provides useful commentary on documentary evidence.

³⁴ *P.1/P. Dura* 28, Drijvers and Healey (1999) 232, lines 5–6, v3, 21.

Palmyra became pre-eminent in the 260s CE, Greek and Palmyrenean civic inscriptions defined Palmyra as a “colony” (*kolōnia*, *qlny*), “most eminent colony,” and finally, “metrocolony,” the last being an intriguing adaptation of a “Semitic” formula.³⁵ Roman colonial status, collective Romanness, could be experienced through Aramaic and Near Eastern idioms.

As many Syrians became Roman citizens and cities increasingly assumed colonial status and to a lesser extent *ius Italicum*, dramatic changes in formulations of Romanness occurred. Previously Greek polities in Syria had integrated Roman idioms and select members who had become Roman citizens into their collectively Greek cultures. But now, the *constitutio Antoniniana* had made many Syrians into Roman citizens with access to Roman private law, and grants of colonial status marked many Greek polities as Roman organisms. Syrians therefore increasingly deemed Syria a culturally Roman landscape, even as many Syrians cultivated Greek or Near Eastern idioms. The civic structures and hegemonic faculties of “colonies” in particular (but not exclusively) generated experiences of collective “Romaness.” They did so by using Latin on coins or in inscriptions, by recasting Greek civic offices with Latin names, or by translating Latin office titles into Greek or sometimes Aramaic. Innumerable strategies in fact shaped the diverse forms through which *coloniae* expressed collective Romanness amid sustained peer polity competition. Instead of being called *archontes*, a city’s yearly elected magistrates could be conceptualized as *duumviri*, its Greek translation *stratēgoi*, or the Syriac transliteration of *stratēgoi* in ways that made the categories of “Greek,” “Roman,” and “Syrian” increasingly coterminous. Certain coin legends even proclaimed their cities to be both *metropoleis* and colonies or even *metrokolōniai*. Also significant is the variety with which cities employed the Latin term *colonia* within their public media. Some cities used Latin (*colonia*), some Greek (*kolōnia*), and others an Aramaic dialect (*qlny* or *qlwny*).³⁶

The Roman administration’s mass distribution of Roman citizenship and frequent grants of colonial rank, which Syrians in turn enacted, thereby contributed to a framework of signification in which overlapping Syrian, Greek, and Roman identifications and affiliations were produced. Amid this process, citizens and communities could express Romanness through an array of idioms to varying imperial, regional, or local audiences. The

³⁵ Hartmann (2001) 210–11 (with n. 170). *PAT* 0278=*CIS* 2.3, 3932=*IP* 18=*IGLS* 17.1.53; *PAT* 0285=*CIS* 2.3, 3939=*IGLS* 17.1.65; *PAT* 1415=*Agora* V.10=*IGLS* 17.1.224. Yon (2004) 318: Semitic formula.

³⁶ Millar (1990) 41–53 provides analysis. Emesa tended to use Greek, Sidon and Damascus used Latin, and Palmyra and Edessa used both Greek and Aramaic.

Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle, compiled by two third-century Syrian authors, indicates how Syrians were increasingly framing Syria as a “Roman” or “Greco-Roman space” amid its polyvalent cultural expressions.³⁷ The oracle generally describes Syria’s inhabitants as “Syrians” and contrasts them with “Assyrians” and other inhabitants of Sasanian Persia.³⁸ Yet, even more important, the first compiler describes the brigand Mariades, an Antiochene, as a Roman who ceased being Roman by colluding with the Persians during the 250s.³⁹ The compiler claims that Mariades’ migration across the Euphrates into Persian territory made him a “fugitive of Rome”; Mariades had fled a discretely Roman space only to return and destroy its cities. Otherwise, the first compiler consistently treats the inhabitants of Roman Syria as “Syrians” and “Romans.”⁴⁰ The second compiler follows suit. When recording how the Palmyrene dynast Odaenathus rose to power in the 260s, this compiler claims that he “will rule the Romans” and through him “the Persians will be weak.”⁴¹

Such contexts for new articulations of Romanness produced the emperor of Rome named Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, or “Elagabalus” (218–22).⁴² Although literary sources for Antoninus’ reign merit circumspection, Antoninus may have redefined Romanness on a scale unprecedented for previous emperors.⁴³ According to such sources, Antoninus was putatively descended from the dynasts who ruled Emesa until c. 73 CE, as well as the Severan dynasty and the Roman aristocracy. He was also the priest of Elagabal, the solar deity of Emesa worshipped as a conical stone, not as an anthropomorphic likeness that typified Greeks and Romans. His cult rites entailed that he dance before his god to flutes and cymbals, and he did so while dressed in “barbarian” fashions, such as the tiara, long tunic, and perhaps pants that the Near East’s dynasts and priests often wore.⁴⁴ In fact, Antoninus allegedly represented what the senatorial

³⁷ Potter (1990) 141–54 discusses the *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*’s composition. A first compiler probably wrote lines 89–154, a second lines 155–74.

³⁸ *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* 13–20, 31–34, 54.

³⁹ *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* 89–102, specifically 99–100. Potter (1990) 268–73 argues for Mariades as the “brigand” of 89–102 and discusses his career.

⁴⁰ *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* 108–112, for instance, describes how Syrians who “mix with the Persians” destroy the Romans of Syria. Likewise, Hartmann (2009) emphasizes the “eastern” perspective on Roman identity and imperial inclusion that this text represents.

⁴¹ *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* 171.

⁴² Icks (2012) 1–91 (with previous works) examines Elagabalus’ reign.

⁴³ Arrizabalaga y Prado (2010) critiques the literary sources’ treatment of Antoninus and their reliability.

⁴⁴ Hdn. 5.3.3–6, 5.4.4 stresses how Antoninus’ cult and dress were neither Greek nor Roman. Cassius Dio 80 [79].11.12 nonetheless cites instances in which Antoninus wore a Roman toga. Dirven (2007) 21–36 describes Antoninus’ dress and his representations on coins, which modified his garb to render it more “Roman.”

aristocracy feared and despised in Syrians: androgyny, wanton sexuality, excessive love for festivals and actors, tyrannical impulses, and lack of Roman and Greek *paideia*.⁴⁵ Despite such stereotypical eastern conduct, whether real or imagined, when Antoninus “Elagabalus” became Rome’s emperor, he made Elagabal the Roman pantheon’s chief divinity over Jupiter Capitolinus, and he promoted Emesa from colony to either “metrocolony” or “metropolis colony.”⁴⁶ After appointing himself his divinity’s chief priest, he married Elagabal to Roman goddesses in rites resembling the Near Eastern custom of sacred marriage.⁴⁷ In this way, he cast his deity’s culturally complex rites as legitimate Roman civic–cultic traditions and made his patron divinity the foremost god of the Roman pantheon. His redefinition of “Roman” traditions, which the Roman senate had been traditionally pre-eminent in defining, prompted Rome’s senators to endorse his murder by praetorian guards.

When Greeks and Romans claimed that such differences of cult distinguished them from Syrians, they were recasting or manipulating material practice. For one, while Greeks and Romans believed that worshipping gods in aniconic stone form, which characterized Emesa’s cult to Elagabal, was a timeless “eastern” practice, the proliferation of such cult performances was stimulated by the contemporary Near East’s culturally complex environment.⁴⁸ Also, Greeks and Romans had noticeably engaged in similar modes of worship, whereas the Near East’s inhabitants had often worshipped human likenesses.⁴⁹ Likewise, while rites of sacred eunuchism or circumcision, with which Antoninus’ hostile critics associated him, had pre-Hellenistic precedents, they also reflected the complex cultural formations of the Roman Near East and Syrians’ adaptation of practices that Greek and Roman representations attributed to them.⁵⁰ Greeks and

⁴⁵ Sommer (2004c) 100–10; Icks (2012) 92–122 examine how Antoninus’ sources “constructed” him as a typical tyrant and depraved Syrian.

⁴⁶ Hdn. 5.6.4–9; Cass. Dio, 80 [79].11 for Antoninus’ elevation of his god to Rome’s most important divinity. Millar (1990) 41 discusses the city’s colonial status, as shown on its Greek coin legends, and Ulpian’s reference to Caracalla’s grant of *ius Italicum* to Emesa.

⁴⁷ Cass. Dio, 80 [79].9.3–4; Hdn. 5.6.1–2; *HA. Heliog.* 6.6–7 portray Antoninus’ marriages. Cass. Dio, 80 [79].12.1–3; Hdn. 5.6.3–5 contain the marriage to Pallas and to Urania/Astarte, whom Herodian calls “Astroarche.” Frey (1989) 87–93 discusses Antoninus’ *Neujahrst* and its most likely date.

⁴⁸ Gaifman (2008) 56–57; Stewart (2008) 312–13. Gaifman (57–67) also examines Nabataean material culture to demonstrate that the terms baetyl and iconic-aniconic for Near Eastern divine representations disguise a “spectrum of forms” ranging from “geometric” to “semi-figural” to “fully figural.”

⁴⁹ Gaifman (2008) 57–67.

⁵⁰ Lightfoot (2002) 71–86, while emphasizing that much information for sacred eunuchism is from hostile Greek or Roman sources that render it an exotic “oriental” practice, argues that it was informed by the interweaving of diverse cultural elements and perhaps Syrian adaptation of Greek and Roman representations. Lightfoot (2003) 1–87 likewise examines the “Syrian” goddess’ general features.

Romans associated such innovative cultural expressions with a timeless and unchanging “east” to defend and replicate their definitions of Greekness and Romanness.⁵¹ Their rhetoric disguised the categorical shifts that Syrian Greeks and Romans implemented as they either assimilated to mainstream Greek or Roman norms or redefined Greek or Roman citizen performance by anchoring it in “hybrid” regional practices. During the third century, Syria’s Roman citizens and its *coloniae* were redefining Romanness, whatever critics farther west claimed.

Sasanian Iranianism and the reign of Shapur I

Amid the changes just described, the emergence of the Sasanian dynasty in Persia facilitated the rise of Palmyra as the center of innovative Greco-Roman performance. Previously, the Parthian Arsacid dynasty had never espoused a common “Parthianism” among its subject communities. While extracting tribute, it administered discrete ethnicities and social groups through appointed officials or local dynasts. The rise of Ardashir and his Sasanian dynasty in 224 CE introduced substantial changes.

Upon consolidating power, the Sasanians organized their subjects into an empire of “Iranians.” Amid this effort, the Sasanians endorsed Zoroastrianism, a Persian religion that preached a cosmic struggle between Ahura Mazda, the manifestation of good, and the forces of evil. As the Sasanians asserted themselves as Ahura Mazda’s chosen kings for the “Iranian” people, they aligned the Romans with cosmic evil.⁵² The Sasanians therefore frequently initiated wars with the Romans, and they transferred captive populations so that they could construct cities and monuments in interior Persia and Mesopotamia.⁵³ By 260, the victories of Shapur I, Ardashir’s successor, had accomplished the murder of Gordian III, the capture of Valerian, and the pillaging of Antioch. In fact, Shapur deported numerous Syrians into his empire’s depths, where he had them build cities (some eponymous) and numerous dynastic monuments.⁵⁴

In his trilingual victory inscription at Naqsh-e Rostam, just east of his palace at Bishapur in the Persian hinterland, Shapur celebrated how he had captured numerous “non-Iranian” or “non-Aryan” (Middle Persian:

⁵¹ Gaifman (2008) 67–72.

⁵² Potter (1987) 150–53. Ardashir does not seem to have prioritized reclaiming Achaemenid Persia’s former territories.

⁵³ Potter (2004) 224–25.

⁵⁴ Potts (1999) 419–24. Canepa (2009) 53–78 discusses Shapur’s monuments. Mousavi and Daryaei (2012) provide the archaeological evidence for some of Shapur’s urban foundations.

Anērān; Parthian: *Anērān*; Greek: *Anarianoi*) Romans and resettled them among his empire's Iranians or Aryans (Middle Persian: *Ērān*; Parthian: *Ērān*; Greek: *Arianoi*).⁵⁵ This inscription, which juxtaposed the Middle Persian, Parthian, and Greek languages, delineates how Sasanian kings interwove different cultural symbols into their expressions of Iranian royal authority. It also indicates that the Sasanians, unlike the Parthians, envisioned a world that distinguished "non-Iranians" from "Iranians," who inhabited Sasanian imperial space.⁵⁶ Although ethnic and religious variation certainly persisted in Sasanian territory, this process gained momentum in the late third century as the *Magus* Kirdir and his followers organized Zoroastrian laws, doctrines, and religious hierarchy. As they formed a church linked to the Sasanian imperial structure, they also persecuted dissident religious elements.⁵⁷ In short, Sasanian royal ideology recognized various regional groups as *ethnē* (Middle Persian: *šahr*; Parthian: *šahr*) and organized them into provinces, but amid such ethno-cultural diversity, it also defined them all as part of a greater *ethnos* of Iranians (*Ērānšahr*) and distinguished them from the Roman empire's inhabitants.⁵⁸ Moreover, evidence for Greek civic communities in Persia by this period is quite weak.

The Sasanian vision of an "Iranian" people probably governed how Shapur deported Greeks and Romans into his kingdom where they were visibly forced to build his cities. This episode reflects how the Sasanians had produced the social categories of "Iranians" and "non-Iranians" to differentiate their empire's inhabitants from those residing farther west in Syria's "Greco-Roman" space. Shapur's military victories over the Romans, the visible works that he had Roman prisoners undertake at sites like Bishapur, and his relief depicting the supplication of the captured emperor Valerian at Naqsh-I Rostam could have only added to such differentiation.⁵⁹ At Naqsh-I Rostam, Shapur's rock reliefs and inscriptions therefore celebrated

⁵⁵ Huyse (1999) 1.43–45, sections 30–32 (I use Huyse's numbering and transcription of the Middle Persian and Parthian texts here and in subsequent citations). Note that the Middle Persian is largely reconstructed. Rubin (2002) provides useful analysis of how concepts from the three languages correspond.

⁵⁶ Daryaei (2009) 4–6 (on Ardashir) stresses that *Ērānšahr* (realm of the Iranians) and "Iranians" constituted all Sasanian territory and its inhabitants. See, for instance, Shapur's trilingual inscription at Naqsh-I Rostam (Huyse (1999) 1.43, sections 30) and Kirdir's Middle Persian career inscriptions, collated and translated by Gignoux (1991) 71, section 14.

⁵⁷ Kreyenbroek (2008) discusses Kirdir and Zoroastrian organization. See Kirdir's Middle Persian career inscriptions, collated and translated by Gignoux (1991), especially 69–72, sections 11, 15–17.

⁵⁸ Rubin (2002) 282–84 provides further gloss on *šahr/ethnos*.

⁵⁹ Canepa (2009) 53–78 provides important analysis of Shapur's monuments and Roman builders. Ball (2000) 116–20, 343–44, 349 (for plan).

the king of the Iranian *ethnos* (*Ērānšahr*), who was protected by the god of light, and his victories over “non-Iranians” and their god of darkness.⁶⁰

The Sasanian dynasty’s consolidation of power and the Severan emperors’ innovations had created a polarized vision of the Near East. The Severans had further established Greek cities and conferred Roman “colonial” status in Syria and newly acquired Mesopotamian territories, thereby categorizing Syria and its newly acquired territories as a Roman or “Greco-Roman” space. The Sasanians created and maintained an Iranian *ethnos/šahr* in Persia proper and the portion of Mesopotamia that they controlled. While this *ethnos/šahr* had varying regional or ethnic manifestations and included descendants of the ancient (As)Syrian/Aramean ethnicity that the Seleucids had defined, it excluded Rome’s “non-Iranian” Syrian *ethnos*. Such divisions appear to have left traces in the confusing variation with which the three languages of Shapur’s inscription labeled Syrians and Assyrians, and, as described shortly, they shaped how the *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, compiled by Syrians, differentiated between Roman Syrians and “Assyrians” of Persia.⁶¹ Despite extensive cultural interaction across imperial boundaries,⁶² the antagonistic imperial pressures of Rome and Persia thereby pitted Greek and Roman Syrians against many “Iranians” or Persians with whom they putatively shared (As)Syrian/Aramean heritage. In this way, imperial efforts to consolidate Roman identification in Syria and Iranian identification in Mesopotamia exacerbated tensions on the Syrian frontier, and throughout the third century, the Greco-Roman and Persian empires waged intense wars along it. These wars enabled Syrian communities to legitimate their innovative performances of Greekness and Romanness and to inhabit their own Greek and Roman imperial space.

Syrian dynasts, Greek performances, and Roman imperialisms

The Sasanian kings sustained their reputations as combatants against evil and exemplars of Iranianism in part by invading Roman territory. Their invasions had profound effects. The Roman imperial system’s inability to meet this pressure was however linked to other contemporary changes. For one, by annexing the kingdom of Osroene and its environs, Rome

⁶⁰ Canepa (2009) 59–68 discusses this theme in Shapur’s inscriptions and monumental reliefs.

⁶¹ Roman Syria is *Asūriyā* (MP and Parth.) and *Syria* (Greek). The traditional Assyrian heartland is *Nūdīragān* (MP and Parth.) and *Abiabēnē* (Greek). Babylonian Mesopotamia is *Asūrestān* (MP and Parth.) and *Assyria* (Greek). See Huyse (1999) 1.22–23, 28, and 45, sections 1–2, 10, 30–32.

⁶² Fowden (1999); Canepa (2009), Lewin (2007), (2011) discuss the complexities of the late antique steppe frontier region.

created a much larger frontier.⁶³ This expanded frontier was still a hotbed of military activity centuries later, when a Jewish rabbi described it as “ribs” that Rome sometimes swallowed and sometimes spit.⁶⁴ During the third century, its defense consumed vast resources, and after the Severans expanded the Roman military for this purpose, the imperial administration system had difficulty collecting revenues for it.⁶⁵ In fact, difficulties in funding the army often prompted legions to kill emperors or appoint new ones who met their needs. Amid civil wars, Roman armies failed to defend the Euphrates frontier.

Amid such socio-political fragmentation, Syrian dynasts situated their local expressions of Greekness and Romanness at the center of their own Roman imperial landscapes. Initially, they assumed consular titles and other hallmarks of Roman imperial governance to display their status as Roman authority figures. As such, they putatively operated within a Roman imperial system on behalf of the Roman emperor, even as they exerted increased autonomy over local or regional affairs. The imperial titles of such figures would eventually culminate in that of Augustus, and Palmyrene dynasts would govern a “Roman empire” embedded in Syria and detached from the central administration farther west. As they did so, the Romans whom they governed anchored their Greekness and Romanness in extremely diverse and heterogeneous cultural idioms.

For instance, the Emesene priest Uranius, who repelled a Persian invasion of Syria Phoenice in 253, adopted Roman titulature, such as *autokrator* (*imperator*), to signify his regional power. Uranius’ full name, Lucius Julius Aurelius Sulpicius Severus Uranius Antoninus echoed those of several emperors, but it also associated him with Urania (*ourania*), the Greek and Roman manifestation of the Phoenician goddess Astarte that the Syrian emperor Antoninus “Elagabalus” had married to Elagabal. His deeds were commemorated in the *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, which described how a priest had rallied the (Syro-)Phoenicians to expel the Persians and thereby offset a “Roman” defeat.⁶⁶ The oracle thereby conceived of Uranius as a Roman and Syro-Phoenician authority figure operating within the Roman imperial structure. Likewise, Antoninus Uranius minted coins at Emesa possessing imperial titlature in Latin or Greek. Their reverses depicted an eagle, a symbol of Roman authority, or significantly the cult stone or

⁶³ Potter (2004) 224.

⁶⁴ Bab. Talmud, *Qiddushin* 72a.

⁶⁵ Potter (1990) 7–11.

⁶⁶ *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, 150–54; Potter (1990) 323–28. An inscription from Emesa’s vicinity rendered Uranius a Greek “hero” who petitioned “Kronos” for aid in resisting the Persians. *IGLS* 4.1799. Baldus (1996) 371–74 describes Antoninus Uranius’ coinage at Emesa, and Baldus (1971) presents catalogue.

temple podium of Elagabal at Emesa. Uranius' adoption of symbols of Roman imperialism framed him as a legitimate authority figure and elevated Emesa's status among Greek polities and Roman *coloniae* in Syria.⁶⁷ Now acting as "Roman *imperator*," Uranius governed a segment of the Roman empire that encompassed only parts of Syria and was centered on Emesa. In such a regional context, the Emesenes' versions of Greek and Roman culture were authoritative, not marginal. If Roman senators had previously defined a priest of Elagabal as a danger to Roman traditions, in the 250s such a priest protected Roman space from Persian invasion.

Papyrus evidence also documents the ascendancy of local dynasts who adopted Roman titulature and claimed to be legitimate imperial authorities, apparently with Roman emperors' assent.⁶⁸ Early in the reign of Gordian III, Abgar X, a member of Osrhoene's royal family, briefly assumed the throne and "the consulship" (*hpty*'), which was a Syriac transliteration of the Greek *hypateia* and connoted consular governorship as *consularis*.⁶⁹ Abgar's coins likewise framed him as a Roman imperial representative over his kingdom, and with symbols of diverse cultural origin. His coin obverses, adorned with Greek legends, portrayed a profile of Gordian III, and his reverses displayed either his profile with a tiara or his shaking hands with Gordian.⁷⁰ But what distinguishes Abgar from Uranius of Emesa and, as we will see, Odaenathus of Palmyra is that he apparently resisted governing a region organized into Greek civic communities or Roman *coloniae*. The Syriac document from Batnae issued during his reign did not emphasize the civic institutions of Batnae or Edessa, and it thereby differs from two Syriac documents produced directly after his deposition. It described his home city as both Edessa and *Urhāy*, and instead of transliterating Edessa's titles of *metropolis* and *colonia* in Syriac, it called Edessa "mother of all the cities of Beth Nahrin." Furthermore, under Abgar, Batnae was initially called "Haykla, New Town of Hunting, of Abgar the king," and it was only reconstituted as the Greek polity Markopolis after his reign's end.⁷¹ Abgar had either earned his titles from Gordian or had appropriated them, but by 242 Gordian had deposed him after ostensibly consolidating his authority in the region. Although brief and apparently antagonistic to Greek civic

⁶⁷ Hartmann (2001) 75 argues this. ⁶⁸ Gnoli (2000) 155–59.

⁶⁹ P.2, Drijvers and Healey (1999) 238, line 4; now Healey (2009) 252. For commentary, Healey (2008b); (2009) 252–64. Ross (2001) 80–81; Gnoli (2007a) 41–44 examine what this title meant for Abgar X's ruling authority and governing powers.

⁷⁰ *BMC Arabia*, 113–17, Pl. 16.7–17.4; Ross (2001) 72.

⁷¹ P.2 (240), Drijvers and Healey (1999) 238, line 5–6; now Healey (2009) 252. For Batnae as Markopolis, P.3 (242), Drijvers and Healey (1999) 243, line i. P.1 and P.3, issued after Abgar's deposition, stress Edessa's status as *metropolis* and *colonia*. Also 232, 243–44.

life and Roman colonial status, Abgar's royal and consular governance represents how local authorities figures behaved as Roman imperial agents. As such, they interwove idioms of Roman, Greek, and Near Eastern authority, which included Aramaic dialects.

Such expressions of Romanness and imperial authority helped dynasts maintain local or regional stability, but they also contributed to the Roman empire's socio-political and cultural fragmentation. Local and regional authorities were by the mid-third century CE expressing concepts of Roman *imperium* or patronizing Greek *politeia* in new and different ways. These trademarks helped them maintain cohesion in their realms as they governed in name on the Roman emperor's behalf. But they also enabled these dynasts to assert autonomy from the imperial administration anchored in the central Mediterranean. Their activity facilitated the potential for a Roman empire without Rome and a "commonwealth" of Greek city-states in Syrian territory that did not accept the pre-eminence of classical Greece. When the second compiler of the *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle* described the Aramaic-speaking Palmyrene dynast Septimius Odaenathus, who had claimed the Persian title "King of kings," as the one who "will rule the Romans," he was commenting on this process.⁷²

As Syrian dynasts engaged in cultural performances that increasingly located them and their subjects in a politically and culturally reconstituted Greco-Roman space, civic elites in Greek *poleis* and Roman *coloniae* followed suit. The city of Palmyra exemplifies this trend. In 211–12, the emperor Caracalla had made Palmyra into a Roman *colonia* with *ius Italicum*. After receiving this rank, the Palmyrene civic authorities reoriented the city's constitution in ways that affirmed its legitimacy as a collective Roman community. The city still possessed a *boulē*, and its authorities still erected civic inscriptions primarily in Greek and Palmyrenean, but the city's archons were now officially labeled *strategoī*, the Greek rendering of *duumviri*.⁷³ Members of the *boulē* increasingly bore the title of *synklētikoi*; this Greek word for senators or decurions often connoted Roman senatorial status.⁷⁴ Despite this, Palmyra's coins deviated from Roman Syria's typical municipal standards.⁷⁵ In such ways, the Palmyrene elite had crafted a

⁷² *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, 171.

⁷³ Dig. 50.15.1.4–5 status: PAT 0278–93=CIS 2.3, 3932–47 (PAT 0278=CIS 2.3, 3932=IP 18=IGLS 17.1.53; PAT 0292=CIS 3946=Inv. 3.19=IP 19; PAT 0293=CIS 2.3, 3947=IP 20=IGLS 17.1.57); inscriptions. These are also generally IGLS 17.1.56–58, 63–69, 74–76 with 54–55, 59–62, 70.

⁷⁴ Hartmann (2001) 59. For *bouleutēs*, PAT 0283=CIS, 2.3, 3937=IGLS 17.1.63. For *synklētikos*, PAT 0290=CIS 2.3, 3944=IGLS 17.1.58; PAT 0558=Inv. 8.55=CIS 2.3, 4202=IGLS 17.1.545; PAT 1358=Inv. 9.28.

⁷⁵ Kaizer (2007).

symbolic universe that generated innovative expressions of Greek and Roman civic performance. These expressions interwove diverse cultural idioms.

Such a performative civic framework, with its cultural implications, persisted even as individual patrons and families exerted increased political power in Palmyra. Previously, Palmyra's civic council possessed aristocrats of relatively equal status who cooperated to govern the city even as certain interlinked notable families wielded the greatest political power and organized protection of caravans. Now, Syria's general instability and the threat of Sasanian invasion had created even more need for powerful notables and patrons to exert authority.⁷⁶ Although the council continued to function on an institutional level, Palmyra's most powerful families, who had accumulated clientage ties, exerted great influence on its collective activity.⁷⁷ Despite this, it remained the central organizing force of the city. Palmyra's dominant clans still governed and exerted strategic authority within its framework of cooperative and competitive performance, and notables operated within the hegemonic system of discourse that it sustained. The council therefore erected a series of honorific statues and inscriptions along the Grand Colonnade between 240 and 270 as Palmyra's dynastic figures harnessed its political and cultural authority to govern.⁷⁸

The civic context just described in many ways constituted the basis on which Septimius Odaenathus (*spt̄myws 'dynt*), a civic councilor with a name of Arabic origin, would consolidate political power as he enacted complex cultural performances of his own.⁷⁹ During the instability of the 250s and 260s, he had become Syria's most effective protector against Persian invasion. After Valerian's disastrous defeat in 260, Odaenathus rallied the Palmyrenes to defeat the Persians on several occasions and eventually pursued Shapur's armies to Ctesiphon.⁸⁰ Still more, he overpowered certain of Gallienus' wayward administrators who coveted the imperial throne at Emesa in 261.⁸¹ Otherwise, numerous inscriptions that individual clients or symposia in the city dedicated document his rise to prominence in Palmyra during the 250s and 260s.⁸² The frequency with which he is

⁷⁶ Hartmann (2001) 86–102; Yon (2002) 142–50; Sommer (2005a) 213–24.

⁷⁷ Hartmann (2001) 95–96.

⁷⁸ *PAT* 0278, generally 0280–82, 0284, 0288=*CIS* 2.3, 3932, 3934–36, 3938, 3942 (also *PAT* 0278=*IP* 18=*IGLS* 17.1.53; *PAT* 0280–82=*IGLS* 17.1.74–76; *PAT* 0284=*IGLS* 17.1.64; *PAT* 0288=*IP* 17=*IGLS* 17.1.67).

⁷⁹ Stark (1971) 65; Harding (1971) 34 provide a likely Arabic root. Gawlikowski (1985) treats Odaenathus' familial identity and genealogy.

⁸⁰ Hartmann (2001) 168–76 traces Odaenathus' itinerary. ⁸¹ Watson (1999) 31.

⁸² Cantineau (1931) 138, no. 17=*PAT* 2753; *Inv.* 3.16=*CIS* 2.3, 3944=*PAT* 0290=*IGLS* 17.1.58; Gawlikowski (1985) 257, no. 13=*PAT* 2815=*IGLS* 17.1.54; *Inv.* 12.37=*IGLS* 17.1.55; Dunant (1971)

honored by Palmyrene associates in inscriptions indicates that he had amassed a huge clientage network in Palmyra. By the early 250s, these inscriptions referred to him in Greek and Palmyrenean Aramaic as “governor of Tadmor” (*ῥῥ dy tdmwr* or *exarchos Palmyrēnōn*) and as a Roman senator, despite his residence there.⁸³ Subsequent inscriptions show that he assumed the status of *hypatikos* (*consularis*) under the Roman emperor Valerian, who presumably appointed him consular legate over the region that he actively controlled, namely Syria Phoenice. Around this time, Palmyrene inscriptions called him *mrn*, Aramaic for “our lord” but also representing how Palmyrenes often described consular governors.⁸⁴ Eventually, Odaenathus wielded imperial governance over Roman Syria from Antioch, along with parts of Anatolia, to upper Mesopotamia. Local inscriptions in Palmyrenean heralded him as “restorer of all the East” (*mtqnn' dy mdnh' kllh*), Aramaic for *restitutor* (or *corrector*) *orientis totius*. He had earned such titles from Gallienus. Finally, inscriptions also described him as “King of kings” (*mlk mlk'* or *basileus basileōn*), the royal titulature employed by Sasanian kings.⁸⁵ While ostensibly governing on the Roman emperor's behalf, Odaenathus' Roman imperial titles and consular status increasingly authorized his autonomous governance of Syria.

It is important to contextualize how Odaenathus' titles served as expressions of Roman authority at Palmyra and more broadly in imperial Syria. The adoption of Roman imperial titles alone did not necessarily constitute a performance of Romanness, and Odaenathus had also embraced Near Eastern titles of authority, such as “King of kings.”⁸⁶ Yet, the emphasis of

no. 52=IGLS 17.1.143; Seyrig (1963) 161–62, Fig. 1–2=IGLS 17.1.59–60; Inv. 3.17=CIS 2.3, 3945=PAT 0291=IGLS 17.1.56; Teixidor (1997) 68–69, no. 2.

⁸³ Cantineau (1931) 138, no. 17=PAT 2753; Inv. 8.55=CIS 2.3, 4202=PAT 0558=IGLS 17.1.545; Gawlikowski (1985) 257, no. 13=PAT 2815=IGLS 17.1.54. The inscriptions date roughly to 250. Hartmann (2001) 467 also presents these inscriptions.

⁸⁴ Inv. 12.37=IGLS 17.1.55; Dunant (1971) no. 52=IGLS 17.1.143; Seyrig (1963) 161–62, Fig. 1–2=IGLS 17.1.59–60, Inv. 3.17=CIS 2.3, 3945=PAT 0291=IGLS 17.1.56; Teixidor (1997) 68–69, no. 2, all of which date at or near 257/58. These inscriptions are in Hartmann (2001) 467–68. Gnoli (2007a) describes how the extension of the “consulship” to client kings set the precedents for Odaenathus' “consular” and governing authority over Palmyra. Hartmann (2001) 102–8 treats Odaenathus' consular status and authority.

⁸⁵ Gawlikowski (1973) 100=IGLS 17.1.120; PAT 0292=CIS 2.3, 3946=Inv. 3.19=IP 19; HA Gall. 1.1, 3.3, and 10.1; Schlumberger (1951) 151, no. 21=PAT 1684. Assembled by Hartmann (2001) 468–69. These all date sometime between 263 and 272. Also, IGLS 17.1.62=Gawlikowski (2007) 299 has been reconstructed to bear Odaenathus' titles. Gnoli (2000) 142–43, 153; (2007a) 90–91 distinguishes *restitutor* from *corrector*, which Odaenathus' son Vaballathus held; Hartmann (2001) 186–94 treats them as the same. Both titles would have connoted the Roman administration's recognition of Odaenathus' effective authority. Dunant (1971) no. 45=PAT 0197=Agora An. 29=IGLS 17.1.150 describes Publicius Marcellus as *kyrios mrn*.

⁸⁶ Sommer (2005a) 169–70.

the council and Odaenathus' clients on Palmyra's metrocolonial status in honorific inscriptions elevated the city above other Greek polities and Roman *coloniae* of the Syrian *ethnos*. The Palmyrenes were therefore envisioning their city as a Roman imperial center governing a portion of the empire framed by the geographical limits of Syria and parts of Mesopotamia. Odaenathus' titles, being symbols of local and regional authority, in this sense legitimated him as a Roman imperial figure, albeit one ruling on behalf of the incumbent Augustus, who perhaps continued to appoint provincial governors, for instance, in Arabia.⁸⁷ Likewise, Odaenathus' status as "King of kings" located him in Persian regal tradition and challenged the legitimacy of the Sasanian monarch Shapur as King of kings "in a Palmyrene context." It perhaps even spelled Odaenathus' ambition to rule Persia officially as Rome's client king and consular governor.⁸⁸ It certainly marked him as the legitimate successor of Persian and Greek Seleucid monarchs, and if his various public images alternated between tiaras and diadems, these did as well.⁸⁹ Still, Odaenathus was also a Roman consular governing the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos* through its network of Greek communities. Such complex interweaving further explains why inscriptions of the 260s endowed Septimius Vorodes (*wrwḏ*) in Greek and Palmyrenean Aramaic with the Roman imperial titles of *kratistos epitropos* (*procurator*) and *dukenarios* (*ducenarius*) and the Persian title *argapetes*.⁹⁰ Despite their cultural variety, these idioms illustrated the authority of Odaenathus, Vorodes, and Palmyra over a network of peer Greek polities and Roman *coloniae* that constituted the core structuring principle of the Syrian *ethnos*. Odaenathus, an Aramaic-speaker, may have succeeded Persian and Greek kings as ruler of Syria and Mesopotamia, but he effectively governed a Roman imperial landscape, and ostensibly on the Roman emperor's behalf.

In this sense, Odaenathus and his Palmyra operated within a Roman imperial framework and a Greek polity "commonwealth" while cultivating Near Eastern idioms of authority and using Aramaic to convey Roman governance. This is why the second compiler of the *Thirteenth Sibylline Oracle*, who represents a Syrian perspective, accredited him with ruling "the Romans." It also explains why the elites of Tyre, which had under the

⁸⁷ Pflaum (1952) 322–24. Hartmann (2001) 189–92 suggests that elsewhere Odaenathus effectively governed officials ostensibly appointed by Gallienus.

⁸⁸ Potter (2004) 260 (quoted). Hartmann (2001) 180–85 also explores the title's anti-Sasanian aspects and Gnoli (2007a) 91–92 interprets it as reflecting Odaenathus' attempt, with Gallienus' support, to reclaim the Arsacid throne from Sasanian usurpation.

⁸⁹ Gawlikowski (2010) 69–70.

⁹⁰ *PAT* 0283–89=CLIS 2.3, 3937–43=*IGLS* 17.1.63–69 document Vorodes' career (*PAT* 0288 also is *IP* 17). Gnoli (2007b) 191–96 discusses.

Severans adopted the name that Odaenathus bore, raised a statue of their governor inscribed Σεπτίμ(ιον) Ὀδαίναθον τον λαμπρότατ(ον) Σεπτιμία κολ(ωνία) Τύρος ἡ μητρόπολις (the colony Septimia, the metropolis Tyre [honors] Septimius Odaenathus, most illustrious). While celebrating the governor's consular status, the inscription authenticated Tyre as a Roman *colonia* and a Greek *metropolis* to Septimius Odaenathus, who shared its name.⁹¹ Yet, while ruling Syria as a Roman imperial representative, Odaenathus and his family exerted greater autonomy from the administration anchored (at least ideologically) in Italy, and this autonomy contributed to the belief that Odaenathus' title of "King of kings" was hereditary. Accordingly, between 260 and 64 CE, after defeating a Persian army, Odaenathus awarded his son Herodian (also called Hairanes) the title of "King of kings" in a ceremony outside Antioch, a title that an inscription on Palmyra's monumental arch associated with Herodian's being "bound" with either a mitra or a diadem.⁹² A *tessera* made in Antioch to celebrate the event depicted Herodian as wearing both a tiara and a diadem, and it described him in Greek as "Herodian the king."⁹³ By performing this ceremony at a site linked to both Seleucid monarchy and Roman governance, Odaenathus undoubtedly enhanced his status as king and the leading Roman senator and *consularis* in the region.⁹⁴

In short, by appointing Herodian "King of kings" in Antioch and apparently crowning him with both tiara and diadem, Odaenathus expressed that he and his children were both Roman imperial agents and successors of the Seleucid Greek and Persian kings who had previously ruled Syria and Mesopotamia. These titles and the ceremony's location also indicate that Odaenathus' dynasty was exerting increased authority over a Roman regional space structured by the Syrian *ethnos'* network of peer Greek *poleis*. Palmyra, the chief city of this regional Roman space, vaunted forms of Greekness and Romanness expressed, at least locally, through Near Eastern idioms. In fact, when the Roman imperial administration anchored farther west and the Palmyrenes clashed in the 270s, their conflict pitted their distinctive forms of Romanness against each other.

⁹¹ Chéhab (1962) 19, Pl. vi, no. 1. For Tyre's colonial status and title of Septimia, see *Digesta*, 15.50.1; Gawlikowski (1985) 259.

⁹² *IGR* 3.1032=Inv. 3.3=IP 11=IGLS 17.1.61 (reflecting most recent reconstructions). The inscription announces how Herodian, "King of kings" had been "tied" at the Orontes with something signifying kingship. This object's nature is missing in the lacuna, but Gawlikowski (2007) 295; Kaizer (2008c) 660 hypothesize a mitra or a diadem.

⁹³ For the inscribed *tessera*, Seyrig (1937) 1–4; Schlumberger (1942–43) 38; Hartmann (2001) 468; Equini Schneider (1993) 22–23, Fig. 16–17.

⁹⁴ Potter (2004) 259.

Zenobia and Vaballathus: a new Greco-Roman empire

After Odaenathus' demise, the Palmyrenes exerted increased autonomous hegemony over Roman imperial Syria amid their innovative expressions of Greekness and Romanness. By 268 CE, Odaenathus and Herodian had been assassinated. Sometime between 267 and 270, Zenobia (*btzby* in Palmyrenean), Odaenathus' wife, claimed the title of *corrector* (or *restitutor*) *totius orientis* (*'pnrtt' dy mđnh' klh*) and "King of kings" for her son Vaballathus.⁹⁵ The regime of the emperor Claudian and then Aurelian accepted that Vaballathus could inherit his father's title "King of kings," but only if it could confer imperial control over "the east" in continuity with Odaenathus' role.⁹⁶ Such a claim to hereditary Roman imperial authority, even without the title *Augustus* and beneath the current emperor, antagonized a Roman regime reasserting control over a fragmentary empire. Rome and Palmyra prepared for combat, and after securing control over the Syrian provinces and the eastern frontier, in 270 Zenobia's forces invaded Arabia and Egypt and captured Alexandria. Zenobia now governed extensive territories once ruled by the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kings, but as a new "Roman empire" centered on Syria.⁹⁷

Amid her conquests, Zenobia issued coinage challenging the supremacy of the Roman emperor and his administration. On certain issues she wrote the names of Aurelian and Athenodorus, one of Vaballathus' Greek names, without any imperial titulature. On others, she backdated the beginning of Vaballathus' reign to Odaenathus' death in 267, which gave him seniority over Aurelian, whose rule began in 270. While initially refraining from labeling her son Vaballathus *Augustus*, she minted coins at Antioch with Latin legends stressing his consular and senatorial status and his monarchical authority. He was *vir consularis*, *rex*, *imperator*, *dux Romanorum*, titles which denoted many prerogatives that his father Odaenathus had exercised.⁹⁸ It is even possible that Vaballathus' portrait and legend were on the obverses and Aurelian's on the reverses of these coins, although

⁹⁵ *PAT* 0317=CIS 2.3, 3971=*Choix* 32. Hartmann (2001) 242 dates the inscription between 267 and 270. For context and dating of Odaenathus' assassination, Potter (2004) 263, 641, n. 1. Stark (1971) 65; Harding (1971) 651; Negev (1991) 24 provide an Arabic root for the name.

⁹⁶ Gnoli (2000) 142–43, 153; (2007a) 90–91, however, posits that Vaballathus' title of *corrector* suggested subordination in ways that Odaenathus' title of *restitutor* did not.

⁹⁷ Hartmann (2001) 259–99 provides description, analysis, and bibliography. Zenobia probably controlled the Syrian provinces from the outset, before intervening in Arabia, Egypt, and Asia Minor. She founded an eponymous city on the Khabur river during this period.

⁹⁸ *RIC* 5.1, Aurelian no. 381; Bauzou (1986); Hartmann (2001) 468; Potter (2004) 267. Aurelian may have deemed Vaballathus' assumption of *imperator* a rival claim to being emperor. Long (1996) 65–66.

Aurelian was depicted as radiate and Vaballathus simply laureate.⁹⁹ By 272, Zenobia had claimed the title of *Augustus* for her son and endowed him with titles reserved only for conquering emperors.¹⁰⁰

It must be stressed that as Palmyra's civic culture adopted and adapted many of the political symbols of imperial Rome, under Odaenathus and then Zenobia, this mimicry premised a potential ideological displacement. Within the framework of Roman imperial Syria, it in theory located Palmyra at the center of Roman political power and culture. Even if Zenobia's regime minted coins or produced milestones with Latin titles to assert claims of imperial hegemony, its subjects could express its Romanness in Greek within Syria's Greek peer polity network and in Aramaic to a Palmyrene audience.¹⁰¹ But Palmyra's title of "metrocolony," its harboring of certain elites who called themselves "senator" (*synklētikos*) while residing there, and its officials' adoption of consular titles, either in Greek or Aramaic, also enhanced its dynasty's bid to rule its own Roman imperial space, Greek commonwealth, and Syrian *ethnos*.¹⁰² As such, Palmyra's Roman empire was centered on the Syrian *ethnos* and its spectrum of complex cultural expressions.

Zenobia accordingly ruled a regionalized version of the Roman empire. But during her rule, Palmyra also became a center of Greek *paideia* to which intellectuals and sophists migrated or oriented their gaze. It thereby challenged the centrality of Athens and other classical Greek cities among Zenobia's Syrians, as academics increasingly categorized the Palmyrene dynasts as protectors of Greek *paideia*.¹⁰³ The orator Longinus, for instance, had been a leading philologist and philosopher of Athens, and he had taught the notable Platonist Plotinus. After the Heruli plundered Athens in 268–69, Longinus apparently migrated to Palmyra, and he became Zenobia's tutor of Greek *paideia*.¹⁰⁴ A panegyric that Longinus wrote for Odaenathus was still circulating a century after he wrote it.¹⁰⁵ Longinus' relocation to Palmyra, his instruction of Zenobia in Greek letters, and his apparent situating of Odaenathus in legitimate Roman imperial succession displeased the administration anchored, in principle, in Italy. Sparing Zenobia, the emperor Aurelian executed Longinus after he captured Palmyra.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁹ Watson (1999) 68.

¹⁰⁰ *ILS* 8924. Hartmann (2001) 244–46, 255–56 documents the phases of Zenobia's reign.

¹⁰¹ *IGR* 3.1065 (near Byblus, celebrating Aurelian and Vaballathus); *PAT* 0293=*CIS* 2.3, 3947=*Inv* 3.20=*IP* 20=*IGLS* 17.1.57; *PAT* 0317=*CIS* 2.3, 3971=*Choix* 32.

¹⁰² Bowersock (1982) 662, 666 discusses implications and provides list.

¹⁰³ Hartmann (2001) 300–8.

¹⁰⁴ *HA Aurel.* 30.3. Also, Photius, *Bibl.* 265.492a.

¹⁰⁵ According to Libanius, *Ep.* 1078.

¹⁰⁶ *HA Aurel.* 30.3.

The sophist Callinicus, from Petra, engaged in a notable rivalry with the sophist Genethlius at Athens. After Athens' destruction in 268–69, he shifted his focus on Palmyra. Callinicus wrote a history of the city of Alexandria, and it was dedicated to a certain "Cleopatra," who was probably Zenobia. If so, his work may have situated Zenobia within the legitimate succession of the Greek and Roman monarchs of Egypt.¹⁰⁷ It is difficult to place him at Zenobia's court, but Libanius' report that the upper Mesopotamian city Callinicus was named for a man who died there suggests his migration.¹⁰⁸ Likewise, Nicostratus of Trebizond composed a history from the reign of Philip the Arab to Odaenathus, apparently locating Odaenathus within a legitimate Roman imperial succession. His work probably contrasted Odaenathus' successes with the disasters of his imperial predecessors.¹⁰⁹

Zenobia's court likely placed her dynasty within the legitimate succession of Greek and Roman governance of Syria and Egypt. No works by her court's intellectuals survive, but the writings of some second- and fourth-century Syrian intellectuals facilitate hypotheses for how Zenobia's court categorized her imperial rule. As described in previous chapters, many first- and second-century Greek, Jewish, and Christian writers from Syria used their mastery of Greek *paideia* to argue that Greek culture had not originated in Greece itself. Instead, the great lawmakers and philosophers of Greece had imitated, adapted, and diminished Near Eastern models. The comic pastiches of Lucian accordingly framed the cultural categories "Greek" and "barbarian" as generated by the staging of "classical" paradigms. Philo of Byblus claimed that Greek poets, such as Homer and Hesiod, had stolen their cosmogony from a Phoenician writer named Sanchouniathos, who antedated them.¹¹⁰ Syrian Christians, such as Tatian, Justin Martyr, and Theophilus of Antioch, exploited their mastery of Greek *paideia* to argue, like Josephus before them, that the greatest lawmakers and intellects of classical Greece, such as Solon and Plato, had merely imitated Moses. By doing so, they stressed that what Greeks had framed as "Greek" culture had been adapted from "barbarian" traditions and excluded other types of Greek culture that were equally as legitimate as Attic types.¹¹¹ Similar engagements with Hellenism penetrated Syriac literature. In a Syriac Christian dialogue composed *c.* 200 CE, the figure

¹⁰⁷ *FGrH* 281.1 (T), from Suda. ¹⁰⁸ Libanius, *Ep.* 21; Bowersock (1983) 135.

¹⁰⁹ *FGrH* 98. Teixidor (2005) 205–6 suggests that Nicostratus accompanied Odaenathus on his campaign into Persia.

¹¹⁰ *FGrH* 790; Baumgarten (1981): Philo's fragmentary works.

¹¹¹ These are some central themes of Tatian, *Ad Gr.*; Justin, *Apol. Mai.* and *Apol. Min.*; Theoph., *Ad. Autol.* For instance, *Ad Gr.* 1, 3–4, 26.7–8, 35–40; *Apol. Mai.* 59–60, *Apol. Min.* 13; *Ad. Autol.* 2.33–38, 3.16–26, 30.

Bardaisan had concluded that Persian Magi, Jews, and Christians could exercise “freedom” within a Roman imperial context by following their own customs, not classical ones.¹¹²

These authors had set important paradigms for how Zenobia and her court intellectuals could place Palmyra and Syria at the center of legitimate Greekness, alongside authentic Romanness. According to this logic, the Greeks of Syria did not imitate or deviate from the paradigms of ancient Greece. Instead, Greekness had originated in the Near East. Because classical Greeks had stolen, distorted, and repackaged it in inferior ways, they had erroneously associated their imitative cultural forms with “civilized Greek culture” and had isolated more ancient and venerable Near Eastern forms as “barbarian.” From this perspective, the Greeks of Syria were not usurping the cultural legitimacy of classical Greek cities stabilized by Rome. They were reclaiming it: “What is Plato but an Atticizing Moses?”¹¹³

Such views survived Palmyra’s suppression in 273 CE. During the fourth century, the Syrian philosopher Iamblichus, a native of Chalcis, in fact argued that the greatest Greek philosophers had assumed the ideas of the Near East’s inhabitants and Egyptians.¹¹⁴ His perceptions were likely to have been shared by Zenobia’s court a century earlier. Zenobia and her client authors were thereby exploiting Greek *paideia* to rewrite the history of Greek and Roman imperialism in ways that placed contemporary Palmyra in its legitimate succession. Their narrative perhaps vaunted Odaenathus’ family as a Roman imperial dynasty that had succeeded the Persians, Seleucids, and Ptolemies as rulers of the same Near East in which Greek culture, replete with Near Eastern idioms, had been born. According to such perspectives, Syrians were not imitation Greeks; Greeks were imitation Syrians.

The intellectualism of Zenobia’s court would have featured the additional advantage of situating Jews and Christians within legitimate Greek traditions. If the laws of Moses and Near Eastern sages had shaped later manifestations of Greek *politeia* and *paideia*, then Jews, Christians, and Greeks of Syria were only practicing different manifestations of the Greek civic culture informed by Near Eastern precedents. It is therefore intriguing that while the imperial administration anchored in Rome sporadically persecuted third-century Jews and Christians, Zenobia apparently patronized their communities. She supported Paul of Samosata, a Christian bishop of

¹¹² As concluded by *The Book of the Laws of the Countries*, 585–611 (Drijvers (1964) 40–62; Ramelli (2009c) 175–207).

¹¹³ Fr. 8 of the second-century philosopher Numenius, also probably a native of Syria. For Numenius’ possible connection to Lucian’s network, Georgiadou and Larmour (1998a) 10–12.

¹¹⁴ Iamb., *Myst.* 1.4, 4.6, 7.5. Kaldellis (2007) 170 also describes Iamblichus’ significance.

Antioch and a theologian who denied the divinity of Christ. Amid doctrinal opposition, he controlled the episcopal throne in Antioch throughout Zenobia's reign, and he allegedly adopted "worldly" emblems of rank and a scepter in such a way that he appeared to be "a *ducenarius* rather than a bishop."¹¹⁵ Zenobia may have also restored certain immunities that the Ptolemaic Greek kings had allegedly granted a synagogue in Egypt.¹¹⁶ Grave inscriptions of the Jewish necropolis at Beth Shearim in Galilee show that many Palmyrene Jews had been buried there.¹¹⁷ Judaism had become popular among Palmyrenes by this time, and Zenobia was endeavoring to patronize her Jewish subjects. Missionaries of the Sasanian prophet Mani perhaps even visited her court to preach a new world religion unfolding in Persia.¹¹⁸ As she asserted her authority over a Roman imperial space for which the Greek polity network of Syria served as the core structuring principle, Zenobia's Jews and Christians, even if maintaining unique practices, were participants in Greek and Roman performance.

Zenobia may also have been galvanizing the "Arab" tribes in southern Syria and the province of Arabia, and various "tribes" apparently aligned with Rome and Palmyra during their confrontation.¹¹⁹ It is impossible to know what the socio-cultural basis, if any, of such alliances were, and it is unclear whether the Palmyrenes' dimorphism and interactions with nomads in their vicinity served as an asset in "Arabian" regions farther south. Yet, Zenobia's efforts to obtain the alignments of sedentary and nomadic "tribes" of south Syria and Arabia indicate how her Palmyrenes were navigating the potential tensions of Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern traditions and accommodating diverse subject audiences. Palmyra's imperial expansion and encroachment noticeably threatened various Greek citizens, villagers, or nomads. Still, its navigation of east and west, sedentary and nomad, and Greek citizen and Syrian peasant had enabled Zenobia to treat her son Vaballathus as embodying the traditions of Roman *imperium*, Greek monarchy, and Near Eastern kingship.

For certain Syrians and residents of the Near East, the rise of Zenobia's Palmyra was not a transcendent moment. Zenobia's brand of Roman imperialism operated according to many principles that had characterized its previous manifestations. It constituted a repressive administration

¹¹⁵ Eusebius, *HE* 7.30.8–9, Potter (2004) 268.

¹¹⁶ As argued by Bowersock (1983) 32 but dismissed by Teixidor (2005) 210–11.

¹¹⁷ *Be. Sh.* vol 2., nos. 11–13, 92, 99–100, *IJO* 3.44–52: inscriptions of Palmyrene Jews. Graf (1989) 148.

¹¹⁸ Gardner and Lieu (2004) 112–14 may document a visit of Mani's missionaries to the court of Zenobia (whom the text calls Nafsha).

¹¹⁹ Graf (1989) 143–67, with Bowersock (1983) 131–35. Some evidence consists of Safaitic inscriptions and pictograms, which are notably tricky to contextualize. MacDonald (1993).

that could intervene unfavorably in village or nomadic traditions. Many “Arab” tribes therefore resisted it. Amid the violence of Palmyrene expansion, citizens of Greek cities and Roman *coloniae* may not have appreciated the elevated status of a newer, closer imperial center.¹²⁰ Many civic elites noticeably conceded their cities to the Roman emperor Aurelian as his columns approached. Still, Zenobia’s imperial regime demonstrates how a Greek civic community of Syria could articulate innovative forms of Greek, Roman, and Syrian civic performance. It also illuminates how the Syrian *ethnos* and its Greek “commonwealth” could locate their unique Greek and Roman expressions at the center of their own (Greco-)Roman space by realigning imperial institutions and discourses.

Zenobia’s regime cast Palmyra simultaneously, and without contradiction, as Greek, Roman, Syrian, and Palmyrene, but in new and different ways. The cultural expressions generated by her reign represent how dynamic Greek, Roman, and Syrian performances could be within the Greco-Roman world. Yet, Palmyra’s dynamism, innovation, and political autonomy stimulated anxieties among the senators of Rome, Greek sophists of classical cities, and a new breed of military emperors and bureaucrats produced in the turbulent frontier territories of the Balkans. By 273 CE, Palmyra and its vibrant cultural forms were crushed by Roman legions.

¹²⁰ *JGLS* 13.1.9107=*Choix* 46 records the decoration of Bostra’s temple of “Jupiter Hammon” after the Palmyrenes destroyed it.

CONCLUSION

A world restored

By 270 CE, the administration symbolically, even if not practically, centered on Rome had acquired as an emperor a successful administrator and general. In 272, after securing the rogue provinces of Gaul and Spain, this emperor, Aurelian, invaded Palmyra's Syria. After defeating Zenobia's generals outside Antioch, he advanced to Palmyra. Although initially sparing the city, he intervened in it more permanently after a subsequent revolt. Palmyra thereafter persisted as a legionary camp under Diocletian and as a small-scale episcopal city throughout late antiquity.¹ Its dynamic culture soon died. No Palmyrenean inscriptions exist after the third century CE. No Palmyrene literature, written in Greek or Aramaic, has been transmitted to modernity. The scholars associated with Zenobia soon faced punishment. Longinus was executed. Callinicus of Petra wrote a work praising the Roman restoration; he was spared.² Zenobia's fate is uncertain. Probably featured in Aurelian's triumphal procession at Rome, she was perhaps married to a senator and safely assimilated into Rome's senatorial aristocracy.³ Palmyra's Roman imperialism was finished.

To commemorate imperial reunification, Aurelian minted coins with the legend *restitutor orbis*.⁴ This "world" that Aurelian "restored" constituted an imperial system symbolically centered on Rome but increasingly governed by emperors and administrators hailing from the Balkans and commanding the legions of the Danubian frontier. Athens momentarily reasserted its cultural primacy. Its historian Dexippus was implicated in its revival.⁵ Palmyra was now insignificant. The temple of Zeus Olympius in Athens was once again the monument of a Panhellenic center. The temple of Bel in Palmyra, like the Jewish temple of Jerusalem, slowly descended into obscurity. Aurelian's world restored was also a world destroyed.

¹ Kaizer (2010c). ² *HA Aurel.* 30.3; *FGrH* 281.

³ Potter (2004) 268–72. ⁴ *RIC* 5.1, Aurelian nos. 287–306.

⁵ *FGrH* 100 (esp. 24–28) for Dexippus' fragments; Potter (2004) 269.

Aurelian's world was nonetheless a changing one. Syrian idioms contributed to its vitality. While invading Syria, Aurelian attributed a victory outside Emesa to the intervention of *Sol Invictus* (the unconquered Sun). At Rome, he erected a temple to this *Sol Invictus*, whom tetrarchic emperors and Constantine would feature on their coinage.⁶ Even if Sol featured a human likeness and not that of a rock, Aurelian's activity fulfilled the vision of the emperor Antoninus "Elagabalus," who tried to make this god into a pre-eminent Roman divinity. Aurelian may have even adopted the titulature of Odaenathus, thereby broadcasting his legitimate rule of Syria.⁷ Meanwhile, cults of Mithras, Zeus Dolichenos (Jupiter Dolichenus), Zeus Heliopolitanos (Jupiter Heliopolitanus), Elagabal, Palmyrene gods, and other divinities of Near Eastern origin were spreading throughout the empire. While primarily attracting Roman soldiers, they found homes in Rome and Ostia.⁸ Greek and Roman culture had in various ways integrated Syrian idioms in many parts of the empire.

Despite intermittent persecution, the cults of the Jews and Christians that originated in Near Eastern regions flourished. Like imperial Greek *politeia*, these constituted expressions of the *présence américaine* that Greek and Roman imperialism generated. Even if their rhetoric toward Greek and Roman pagans could be inimical, Jews and Christians still carved unique niches within a vast, diverse spectrum of Greek and Roman practice. Four decades after Palmyra's suppression, Constantine made Christianity into a legal religion. Over the centuries that followed, Christian sects, in their diverse forms and expressions, dominated the public faces of Greek and Roman cities. Although late antique Christians increasingly denied Greek identification and ascribed it to pagan "others," Christianity helped reconstitute Romanness so that it interwove Near Eastern, Greek, and Roman narratives, symbols, and artistic motifs. Unlike the Christian Syrian Justin Martyr, who pitted his "barbarian" performances of Greek *paideia* against those of (Greco-)Romans two centuries earlier, the Christians of this era claimed true Romanness as they isolated more "traditional" Greek or Roman practices as illegitimate. The articulations of Greekness and Romanness that Hadrian and his empire exemplified disappeared from public spaces as they lost imperial support and as Christian church

⁶ *HA Aurel.* 25.4–6, 35.3.

⁷ Potter (2004) 272. A milestone near Emesa renders Aurelian *imperator orientis*, a title similar to Odaenathus' Palmyrenean title of *mtqnn' dy mdnh' klh*.

⁸ Vermaseren (1956), nos. 327–639, Hörig and Schwertheim (1987), nos. 355–434, Hajjar 1977–1985, nos. 286–95; Bellelli and Bianchi (1996); Gysens (1996); *PAT* 0247–50 = *CIS* 2.3, 3902–5; Fowlkes-Childs (2012). Kropp (2010b); Collar (2011), (2012) discuss formative features of Zeus Heliopolitanos and Zeus Dolichenos.

communities accrued wealth, civic responsibilities, imperial patronage, and converts.⁹

As Christianity became increasingly pre-eminent in Greek or Roman life, traditional Greco-Roman imperial and cultural centers waned. The importance of defending the Danubian and the Euphrates frontiers had increasingly attracted emperors from Rome and diverted them from lavishing their attention on the Panhellenic league. A new breed of military emperor, often the product of the Balkans, displaced the more “intellectual” philhellenizing paradigm of Hadrian and his successors, and they established their capitals and palaces on the empire’s frontiers. When Constantine built Constantinople on the Bosphorus strait and decorated it with many great artifacts of classical Greece and Rome, he was in many ways resolving the competition among cities such as Rome, Athens, Antioch, and Palmyra for socio-political and cultural centrality.¹⁰ Constantinople became the compromise binding Syria to Rome’s empire. Nonetheless, this empire’s ability to govern the vast and diverse populations of the Near East was limited. When Arabs eventually ruled the region centuries later, they consciously opposed the Roman imperial system. Unlike Zenobia, who made Palmyra the center of a Greco-Roman empire, Mohammed’s successors endeavored to locate their Arabs in an Islamic one.

Jerusalem itself perhaps best exemplifies the destruction, recreation, and transition that Syria witnessed from Antiochus IV to Constantine as the categories of “Greek,” “Roman,” and “Syrian” were continually reconstituted. During the reign of Antiochus, the Jewish temple was briefly the home of Zeus Olympius, whom Maccabean insurgents then expelled. Destroyed by Roman legions, it was overshadowed by the temple to Jupiter Capitolinus perhaps located on the forum of Hadrian’s Aelia Capitolina (chapter 6). Yet, as Hadrian’s empire transformed into its late antique manifestation, the dominant cult site of Jerusalem became Constantine’s Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built upon Hadrian’s forum and temple of Venus. Constantine’s church, like his eponymous city, was embedded in a reconstituted form of Greekness and Romanness that reveled in its authoritative Near Eastern traditions. In this sense, the Greco-Roman world had come to reflect the examples of the king-priest Antiochus I of Commagene, the wayward priest-emperor Antoninus “Elagabalus,” and the empress Zenobia as much as those of Antiochus IV and Hadrian. While not the center of the Greco-Roman world, Syria had forever transformed what “Greek” and “Roman” were.

⁹ Liebeschuetz (2000).

¹⁰ As argued by Dagron (1974). For statues and artifacts, Bassett (2004).

Greekness and its manifestations

This study, hopefully, has shown how diverse performances of Greekness (with Syrianness and Romanness) were in antiquity. These concepts cannot be attached to a stable, unchanging set of materials, idioms, and practices. They cannot be framed by universally applicable definitions. They cannot be uniformly treated as “ethnic”; civic solidarities often displaced ethnic division. They cannot be reckoned as simply a manifestation of culture, for what constituted Greek or Syrian culture was shaped and reshaped by civic affiliations and networks. Although classical Greek authors and Roman imperial sophists who imitated them classified true Greekness in particular ways, their perceptions constituted self-interested claims. Ancients did not have to accept them; moderns do not either. Greekness did not always have to be “classical.” It did not have to be anchored in a “classical” past, canon, or topography. Even if modern scholars have located the origins of western subjecthood in a classical Greece that resisted “oriental” despotism, Greekness could be expressed through Near Eastern languages, practices, idioms, and objects. Greeks could enact performances that redefined what Greek culture was. Following their ancient Greek and Roman sources, modern scholars have often classified the Roman Near East’s inhabitants as “other” to contrast them with classical proto-westerners. But these inhabitants in many instances framed themselves as Greeks. They often did so according to civic criteria and by vaunting forms of Greek and Roman identification celebrating Near Eastern idioms. When scholars assume a connection between Greekness and classical idioms, they channel their sources’ rhetoric. They also edify the modern Eurocentric belief that since ancient Greece could have constituted the origins of western civilization, Near Eastern Greekness was not so Greek.¹¹

Likewise, Greek or Roman idioms did not always correlate simply to Greekness and Romanness. Laden with connotations of royal legitimacy and power, they offered new ways for Syrians and other Near Eastern societies to articulate prestige and authority. Subjects domesticated them within their litany of strategic acts. While the processes of Greek and Roman imperialism had disseminated these idioms, their transmission was not uniform or one-sided. Syrians cultivated or neglected them amid their broader engagement with the socio-political context into which Greek and Roman imperialism had thrust them. They selectively incorporated them into new modes of local performance. Sometimes these modes of

¹¹ Scholars have in fact used the anachronistic, racialized words “Semite” and “Semitic” for diverse Near Eastern peoples, even Greeks. Teixidor (1987) 187–89; Ball (2000) 89.

performance signified Greekness or Romanness, but they could also demonstrate prestige within local or regional frameworks or among Near Eastern ethnicities and societies.

In a similar vein, provincial Syrians did not merely produce innovative Greek and Roman expressions, but they generated Syrian cultures, a spectrum of intersecting sets of idioms that signified Syrianness. Their Syrianness was shaped by their cognition of a Syrian *ethnos* and their social positioning with it. Roman imperialism had defined this *ethnos*, but Syrians themselves endowed it with regional civic significance. Their cultural expressions defy expectations that ethnic formulations conveyed by Near Eastern practices and symbols constituted the only legitimate Syrian social identifications. They also illustrate how Syrian ethnicity or indigeneity could be recreated through the integration of Greek signs and narratives. To claim that no Syrian culture existed is to overlook the dynamism of Syrian social practice. Diverse but overlapping sets of symbols inhabiting a vast spectrum could articulate Syrian social identification. Likewise, the same polyvalent symbols could at once express overlapping categories of Greekness, Syrianness, and other social affiliations. To describe creolization, hybridity, *bricolage*, the Middle Ground, and parallel cultural universes without analyzing how they realigned imperial and provincial categories is to classify non-being. It is to locate provincials in an ambiguous, amorphous space “somewhere” between what are presumed “pure” or “authentic” identities. Syrians in fact realigned and reconstituted what could be experienced as pure or authentic categories through hybridizing and “impure” processes, which themselves determine all categories experienced as pure or authentic. Their Syrian *ethnos* encapsulated a regional social affiliation endowed with civic implications and expressed by diverse cultural and linguistic traits. It persisted as such into late antiquity. But by then it coexisted in tension with another formulation originating around Edessa and mediated by Christianity: that of a Syrian ethnicity possessing common Syriac language.¹²

Despite the wealth of material evidence that demonstrates the nature of cultural forms and idioms in the Near East, little data explicitly delineate how the vast majority of Syrians framed the meanings of such material, especially in daily routines or domestic spaces. It is nonetheless important to emphasize the following observations. First, although not ample, certain articles of epigraphic and literary evidence, which chapters 3 and 4 discuss, indicate that Syrians deemed their communities collectively Greek despite

¹² Wood (2010) has recently illuminated this phenomenon.

the diversity of their cultural forms. Inscriptions, monuments, and art also indicate how such Syrian notables and civic councils shaped material conditions and ideological frameworks through which normative perceptions and experiences of Greekness were disseminated. The civic magistrates of Nysa-Scythopolis and Nicholas of Damascus in fact asserted to their audiences that their cities were embedded in a broader network of *poleis Hellēnides*. Likewise, the inscription erected by the “Greeks among the Danaboi” demonstrates that Greek citizens who inhabited the countryside differentiated themselves from the local populations or “villagers” among whom they dwelled.¹³ This evidence has vast significance for the unique cultures of cities such as Palmyra or Dura-Europos. Amid cultural discrepancy, their citizens acted within a “commonwealth” of *poleis Hellēnides* in the province(s) of the Syrian *ethnos*. They often imitated or competed with these cities through distinctive forms of architectural aggrandizement, the establishment of civic councils, athletics, and an epigraphic rhetoric of citizen honor. As Greek citizens, they distinguished themselves from local “peasants” and nomads even if they maintained kinship, commercial, or friendship ties with them. Yet, they also produced forms of Greekness contrasting with the strictly “classical” forms farther west. As a result, such people maintained identifications as Greeks that intersected with other social categories.

It is impossible to isolate the “true identities,” internal dispositions, or deepest thoughts of Syrians; these are epistemologically irretrievable. This study has therefore measured their “Greekness” according to modes of discourse and performance that signified claims to being Greek in local, regional, and imperial contexts. It has endeavored to isolate what speech patterns, practices, material objects, and forms of interaction imperial subjects charged with connotations of Greekness, and how such subjects implemented them in their strategies of self-fashioning before audiences of putative Greek peers, Roman imperial agents, and villagers. As this work argues, citizenship, civic affiliation, and peer polity networking determined what strategic Greek performances were. Such performances, which enjoyed much variation, embedded Syrians in a network of Greek polities, a Greek “commonwealth” that constituted the core structuring principle of the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos*.

This study has therefore focused on how Greekness was performed and communicated within and among diverse types of people and between actors and spectators. This communication shaped how Greekness was

¹³ Sartre (1993) 133–35. Sartre (2009) 331–36 examines this inscription’s historical context.

defined and how “Greeks” *schēmata* and *prosōpa*, as Lucian would have it, were framed. Over time, Syrians pitted their expressions and performances of Greekness and Romanness, their *doxai*, against those produced by the inhabitants of classical Greece and Roman Italy. It is impossible to tell whether Syrians believed that they were Greek within their deepest thoughts. Yet, as shown by the polyvalent “standard” or “sign” with which this work began, it is possible to measure whether they cultivated “signs” of Greekness within local or regional contexts for audiences that were ideally to accept their performances as legitimate. The same claims can be made for the issue of “Romanness” and “Syrianness” in the Near East. While producing and experiencing many diverse forms of local identifications, imperial subjects cast themselves as Greeks, Syrians, and Romans, but in new ways.

This study has endeavored to delineate a key transformation. It maintains that Greek civic communities under Seleucid and Parthian rule generally excluded ethnic Syrians and increasingly included them after Roman intervention. As discussed in relevant chapters, various Hellenistic inscriptions, cuneiform wedges of Seleucid and Parthian Babylon, epigraphic and papyrus documents of Parthian- and Roman-era Dura-Europos, and the third-century *P. Euphrates* papyri indicate that this trend occurred. Literary documents also suggest such a transition. They show that Pompey’s settlement of Cilician pirates in Soli-Pompeïopolis, his “restoration” of Greek polities that the Hasmonaeans had conquered, and the Herodians’ Greek civic foundations produced “Greek” citizens simply by organizing Near Eastern ethnics into “Greek” civic *politeiai*. This study has also argued that the term “Syrian,” an ethnic denotation under Seleucid rule, assumed increasing civic connotations under the Romans. It maintains that social affiliation within the Roman imperial Syrian *ethnos* could be articulated through intersecting sets of Greek and Near Eastern idioms inhabiting a vast spectrum. These trends are illustrated by epitaphs for Canathenes, by the writings of Josephus, certain New Testament authors, the civic cultures of Antioch, Apamea, Gerasa, Palmyra, and Dura-Europos, and Lucian’s treatment of Hierapolis in *On the Syrian Goddess*.

Indeed, this study has endeavored to outline the socio-political frameworks of Syria during various phases of imperial intervention, to show how such frameworks affected cultural performances, their tensions, and their resolution, and to demonstrate how they shaped continually shifting dimensions of conflict. The socio-political tendencies of Seleucid rule, which upheld distinctions between Greek citizens and Near Eastern ethnics, stimulated social divisions and possibilities of strife. Under the Romans, the

situation was different. Although Roman intervention did not stimulate the total integration of temple structures or “villages” into Greek city-states or extend Greek citizenship to all Syrians, such tendencies were prominent. They empowered ethnic Greeks influenced by local traditions and certain ethnic Syrians to engage in cultural strategies through which they redefined Greekness and Romanness and espoused the legitimacy of such new provincial forms. Syrians could in fact pit their own Greek and Roman cultures against more conservative or “traditional” cultures represented by Roman emperors, the senatorial aristocracy, or Greek elites operating within classical cities. In addition, Syrians selectively deployed Greek, Roman, and Near Eastern forms to craft innovative ways of “being Syrian.” The overlapping processes just described informed the cultic reforms of Antoninus “Elagabalus” and the Palmyrene ascendancy during the third century CE.

In modern times, westerners have located the incipient roots of their cultural identifications in the traditions of the classical Greeks, especially Athenians. They have celebrated and imitated their philosophy, their democracy, and their monuments. They have identified the “origins” of western culture by contrasting classical Greeks with the threat of “oriental” despotism and subservience. This threat has often been associated with the Persian invasions of the fifth century BCE and the degeneracy that Alexander’s conquests allegedly introduced as Greeks adopted “eastern” cultural forms.¹⁴ Recent work, of course, has dismissed the older premise that the Hellenistic and Roman periods featured degeneracy and decline for Greeks. It instead illuminates how these periods’ Greeks assimilated “barbarian” traditions by giving them more classical features and how “barbarians” assimilated Greek traditions in similar ways. But these periods are still often viewed through the lenses of a hybridity that lapses into syncretism or of navigations among parallel but different cultural systems. Scholars do not typically treat these as periods in which Greeks and “barbarians” reconstituted, reinvented, and restaged Hellenism in ways that produced new types of Greeks or conveyed Greekness through unassimilated, un-classical traditions.

These views are not merely modern confections. Many classical Greek writers and Roman imperial sophists anchored “proper” Greekness in the creative imitation of classical idioms in order to consolidate the binary of “Greek” and “eastern.”¹⁵ By doing so, they highlighted the legitimacy

¹⁴ Droyson’s framing of the “Hellenistic period” stimulated this tradition. Grote (1857) 12.269–70; Mommsen (1886) 125–35; Bevan (1902), vol. 1, 14–15; Tarn (1930) 5. In Tarn’s day, the Hellenistic period oversaw the decay of Greek culture or “pure Aegean” Greek stock through intermarriage.

¹⁵ Numerous important studies explore sophists and Greek culture under Rome. Anderson (1993); Swain (1996); Schmitz (1997); Goldhill (2001a); Alcock *et al.* (2001); Whitmarsh (2001) and (2005a);

of their classical Greek forms and undermined the Greekness of eastern “barbarians” or “frauds.” Yet, instead of being recognized as the viewpoints of authors with self-interested agendas, such claims are often assumed to encapsulate what Greekness or Hellenism actually were, with universal applicability. As a result, they have become key elements by which moderns have produced narratives of the “East” and “West” and the triumph of a western modernity with its roots in “classical” origins. What this study has stressed is that such a stable distinction between legitimately “Greek” and “eastern” culture is often untenable. As modern westerners have identified and authenticated the Greeks from whom they have received their cultural patrimony, they have classified many Greeks of antiquity as “eastern” or “oriental.” But some such “orientals” assimilated to mainstream classical Greek culture; others claimed legitimate Greekness by interweaving classical idioms and Near Eastern cultural forms in complicated ways. Indeed, the “*sēmeion*” that introduced this work illustrates how Greekness could assume many significations and integrate idioms of diverse cultural origins. The polyvalent “sign” of Greekness did not possess a single likeness, but it incorporated many different ones. The “sign” also could signify many diverse, intersecting categories all at once. What constituted such “Greek” tradition(s) was open to multiple engagements and formulations, and Greekness did not have to be strictly “classical” or house idioms originating from Greece itself. The same can be argued for Romanness and its attachment to Italy. Alternative *doxai* existed.

I can only hope that this work, with its unintended flaws, has produced a meaningful narrative of these alternatives in Hellenistic and Roman Syria. In this vein, I offer a final tribute to Lucian’s *On the Syrian Goddess*. As he completes his narrative, Lucian’s anonymous narrator leaves for his readers a casket holding a lock of his hair. His lock is a testament of his devotion to a sacred site, for which he had undergone the exertions of pilgrimage, viewing, critical examination, and then writing. For indeed, all histories bear traces of their authors’ labor even when their authors have cast aside their masks and have ceased to perform. I likewise now entrust this history to its readers’ thoughtful discretion. The spectacle is over; I leave its stage. Its *doxa* is for you to share.

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